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Qaboos meets Mubarak

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak met Sultan Qaboos of Oman here Monday amid preparations for an Arab summit later this month to work out a strategy for the peace process with Israel. Sultan Qaboos, arriving from Saudi Arabia for a five-day visit to Egypt, held brief talks with Mr. Mubarak then met Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdel Meguid. The visit "will permit coordination between Mubarak and Sultan Qaboos concerning the summit, its proceedings and its subjects," Egypt's Foreign Minister Amr Musa told journalists. The two leaders will also discuss bilateral ties, Mr. Musa said, adding that the talks would continue on Tuesday. "Sultan Qaboos is one of the foremost Arab leaders who believe in the necessity of closing Arab ranks and ending disputes and rising above them," Mr. Mubarak told the weekly Mayo on Monday. League sources said Mr. Abdel Meguid discussed with the Sultan "efforts underway to clear the air among Arab states and achieve reconciliation." They also discussed the unrest in Bahrain.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جورديان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية «الراي»

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Regent condoles Bahraini leader

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, on Monday sent a cable to Sheikh Isa Bin Salman Al Khalifa of Bahrain condoling him over the death of Sheikh Mohammad Ben Ali Ahmad Al Khalifa.

Kabariti heads for Washington talks

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti left for the U.S. on Monday to join the Jordanian delegation headed by His Majesty King Hussein to the Jordan-U.S. meetings to be held on Thursday. Accompanying the prime minister were Minister of Water and Irrigation Samir Kawa, Minister of Justice Abdul Karim Dughmi and Minister of Information Marwan Muasher. A Royal Decree was issued on Monday naming Minister of Higher Education Abdullah Ensour as acting prime minister and Minister of Transport Naser Lawzi as acting minister of information.

Turkey defends accord with Israel

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkey stressed Monday that a military cooperation accord it has signed with Israel did not target Arab countries. "The agreement is not against any third side," Foreign Ministry spokesman Omer Akbel told a news briefing. "We have explained this fact to our friends several times. Turkey has similar cooperation agreements with seven Arab countries, including Egypt." He was responding to a joint statement by the leaders of Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Syria at a Damascus summit at the weekend, calling on Turkey to "reconsider" the accord with Israel.

PNA police free Islamic Jihad leader

GAZA (R) — Palestinian police freed a leader of the militant Islamic Jihad group after holding him for more than two months in detention. Palestinian sources said on Monday. They said Sheikh Nafez Azzam, a militant spokesman for the small but militant organisation, was released on Sunday without being charged. There was no official comment from either the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) or Islamic Jihad on the release.

Greece accuses Turkey of undermining peace

ATHENS (R) — Greek Prime Minister Costas Karamanlis accused Turkey on Monday of undermining peace in the Aegean Sea region and said Greece's armed forces were ready to face any provocation. "Turkey systematically undermines stability in the region and the climate of good neighbourly relations," Mr. Karamanlis said in a speech after a special cabinet meeting on foreign policy and defence.

Iraqi gunmen attack Kuwaiti farm

KUWAIT (R) — Several Iraqi gunmen raided a border Kuwaiti farm, stabbed workers there and beat them up, Kuwait's Al Anbaa newspaper reported on Monday. It quoted Mohammad Al Adwan, the owner of the farm in Al Abdali border area, as saying the gunmen who attacked at dawn on Sunday were armed with pistols and machine guns. He said they threatened the workers "then tied them up to prevent them from running for help. They beat them up, tortured them with electricity shocks and stabbed them with knives."

Egypt reports highly positive response to summit invitations

Sudan in; Iraq, Somalia excluded

CAIRO (Agencies) — Egypt reported on Monday an overwhelmingly positive response to its invitations to an Arab summit on June 21-23 on the implications for Middle East peace of the new right-wing government in Israel.

Egyptian officials said the Arab leaders invited had said they would send representatives to the meeting, the first full summit the Arabs have managed to arrange since 1990.

The 15 leaders, and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, represent all Arab League members except Iraq, and Somalia, which has no recognised government. Iraq was not invited, mainly because of objections from the Gulf states. Egyptian Foreign Ministry sources said an Egyptian envoy would go to Khartoum to invite Sudan. "All the Arab leaders have expressed their complete willingness to have their countries represented... (and) it has been decided to invite Sudan," said Mr. Mubarak, who blames the Khartoum government for an attempt to assassinate him in Addis Ababa a year ago.

20 Arab countries to attend summit

CAIRO (AFP) — Twenty members of the Arab League are to take part in the first Arab summit in six years, to be held in Cairo on June 21-23, with only Iraq and Somalia left out, officials said Monday.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak has so far contacted 18 countries and all have accepted his invitation to the summit, Mubarak's chief political advisor Osama Al Baz told the government daily Al Gumbouria.

Acceptances came from Algeria, Bahrain, the Comoros, Djibouti, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, the Palestinians, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen, Dr. Baz said.

Sudan said it would accept once it receives an invitation, which Mr. Mubarak has said he would extend despite the disputes between Cairo and Khartoum.

Abdul Azim Awad, a spokesman at the Sudanese embassy in Cairo, told AFP that Egypt would send an envoy to Khartoum on Monday with an invitation for President Omar Al Bashir, whom Mr. Mubarak has not met since June 1993.

Jordan hopes summit will produce positive outcome

HIS ROYAL Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, welcomed the Arab summit to be held in Cairo on June 21-23.

In an interview with Jordan Television, Prince Hassan said the summit conforms with Jordan's calls for reunifying Arab ranks.

"Arab meetings are natural, but what is more important is that they carry substance and be objective," he said. "We hope that the meeting will not be influenced by circumstantial challenges. The renewal of violence in recent days within the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict is worrisome and the results of the Israeli elections are the characteristics of 1996. But I say that the Arab Islamic identity in this region of the world will not be served without cooperation, unity and solidarity among Arabs themselves."

Khartoum. Inayat Abdul Hamid, head of the Sudanese parliament's foreign affairs committee, told the Al Rai Al Akir daily that his country would agree to attend once it receives the invitation.

"It is important to convene the summit in the Egyptian capital because Egypt is a main party in the Middle East issue and the peace process," he added.

Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia agreed to call the summit at a meeting in Damascus last week, the latest of several high-level Arab consultations on how to respond to the victory of hardliner Benjamin Netanyahu in Israeli election last month.

Mr. Mubarak said: "We agreed... to postpone the participation of Iraq at this time, in view of the severe sensitivities which existed since Iraq invaded Kuwait."

The Egyptian president, speaking in an interview with the ruling party newspaper Mayo, said he was optimistic about the summit and confident that peace talks would continue.

Mr. Netanyahu has dismayed Israel's Arab neighbours, especially the Palestinians, with statements questioning the principle of "land-for-peace" — one of the fundamentals of the Madrid conference, which set the stage for direct talks in 1991.

(Continued on page 7)

Washington warns Arabs

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher on Monday urged Arab leaders, ahead of the June 21-23 summit in Cairo, not to take any action that could "close doors" with Israel's new hardline government and harm the peace process.

"I think it's particularly important that they not close any doors at the present time, that they not take any action that would derail the peace process," Mr. Christopher told reporters at a brief news conference with his Australian counterpart.

"We've been urging all parties not to rush to judgement, to withhold their judgement until the new Israeli government is formed," he said.

The secretary was to meet in Washington Tuesday with King Hussein, who also will meet with President Bill Clinton Thursday.

Mr. Christopher said he would telephone Arab leaders, whom he did not name, before the summit to discuss relevant issues.

"In my comments to my Arab colleagues over the next week or ten days prior to the summit I'm going to be emphasising the point that this is no time to be closing doors or to take any action that would preclude a relationship between the new Israeli government and the Arab countries," he said.

Mr. Christopher said he would reiterate what he has said often since hardliner Benjamin Netanyahu ousted peace process architect Shimon Peres as prime minister of Israel that the parties should "withhold their judgement," until the new Israeli government is officially formed and makes its positions clear.

State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said Mr. Christopher was not anticipating any specific action or statement by the Arab leaders that could jeopardise the peace process but was speaking in general terms.

Jordan marks Great Arab Revolt

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, on Monday sent a cable to His Majesty King Hussein, who is currently on a visit to the U.S., to congratulate him on the occasion of the Great Arab Revolt and Army Day.

Prince Hassan paid tribute to the King's efforts to develop the Armed Forces and uphold the principles of the Great Arab Revolt.

Prince Hassan sent another cable to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs-of-Staff, Field Marshal Abdul Hafez Mirai, congratulating him, the army's officers and soldiers on the occasion.

Also Monday, the Regent attended a ceremony organised by the Armed Forces at the Martyrs' Monument to mark the 80th anniversary of the Great Arab Revolt.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, on Monday decorates an Armed Forces officer as part of annual awards to military personnel on the occasion of the Great Arab Revolt and Army Day (photo by Boghos)

At a ceremony held earlier at the Royal Court, the Regent decorated Armed Forces personnel with medals.

Prince Hassan also attended a dinner hosted in his honour by Field Marshal Mirai.

5 Israeli soldiers killed and eight wounded in S. Lebanon ambush

MARJAYOUN, Lebanon (AFP) — Hizbollah guerrillas killed five Israeli soldiers and wounded eight in an ambush in South Lebanon Monday in the deadliest attack since an April ceasefire.

The Iranian-backed guerrillas pledged to "transform South Lebanon into a volcano to throw out the Israeli occupation," in a statement claiming the dawn attack in which a Hizbollah fighter was also killed.

Israel hit back hard by raining around 150 shells on suspected Hizbollah positions, killing an off-duty Lebanese army sergeant and wounding a civilian, Lebanese police said.

The Jewish state's caretaker Prime Minister Shimon Peres held an urgent meeting to discuss the Lebanon situation with his successor, Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu, and promised further retaliation. "Israel will react when, where and how it deems necessary to this attack," said Mr. Peres after visiting northern Israel.

The Hizbollah guerrillas opened fire with automatic weapons and Sagger anti-tank rockets in the attack near Dabshe, which controls access to the central part of the Israeli-occupied "security zone."

Security sources said two Israeli troop transporters which arrived as reinforcements were targeted by rockets, and that one took a direct hit.

An Israeli army spokesman said two lieutenants and three soldiers died in the attack, and that three of the wounded were seriously hurt.

The two Lebanese casualties were travelling in a car which was hit by shrapnel from Israeli shelling of Habbush, six kilometers from the occupied buffer strip.

Lebanese police said Israeli fighter jets also overflew the region.

Hizbollah said Monday's ambush was part of "a settling of accounts for the massacres committed by the Israelis in April," a reference to Israel's offensive against Hizbollah that killed more than 200 Lebanese, mostly civilians, the group said.

The group, which spearheads South Lebanon border zone, has increased attacks since the election of Mr. Netanyahu in May 29 polls in the Jewish state.

Just one day after Mr. Netanyahu's victory Hizbollah killed four Israeli soldiers in an ambush — the first Israeli casualties since a U.S.-brokered truce ended a 17-day war between the two sides on April 26.

Monday's attack brings the Israeli death toll in South Lebanon to nine since the elections and marks a direct challenge by Hizbollah to the authority of Mr. Netanyahu.

The Likud leader campaigned on a tough stance pledging to uphold Israeli security and was fiercely critical of Mr. Peres' Grapes of Wrath offensive against Hizbollah which he said did not go far enough.

Lebanese Foreign Minister Fares Rouez said Monday "the escalation in South Lebanon reflects the tension in the region" since the election of Mr. Netanyahu.

A Hizbollah spokesman in Beirut said the "Israeli bombardment of civilian targets" was a "blatant violation of the April understanding," hinting the group might resume its Katyusha rocket attacks on northern Israel.

Under the terms of the April 26 deal Hizbollah and Israel pledged not to target civilians on either side of the border.

But the agreement does not rule out Hizbollah attacks against the "security zone" or Israeli retaliation.

The truce called for the

(Continued on page 7)

Netanyahu puts final touches to his cabinet

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Prime Minister-elect Benjamin Netanyahu put the finishing touches to his new cabinet Monday with a closely watched meeting with Ariel Sharon, the powerful leader of his Likud Party's ultra-nationalist right-wing.

With the Palestinians and Arab states avidly following his actions for signs of the new government approach to the peace process, Mr. Netanyahu wrapped up meetings with Likud heavyweights and was expected to present his cabinet early next week.

After interrupting his political consultations to meet with outgoing Prime Minister Shimon Peres about rising tensions in Lebanon, Mr. Netanyahu was to hold talks late Monday with Ariel Sharon, a former defence minister and hardline opponent of Palestinian autonomy who has been demanding the powerful defence or finance portfolios.

Mr. Netanyahu was expected to offer him instead a budget-rich economic portfolio built around the housing ministry. The job would put him in a position to press hard with the stated Likud policy of warning to expand Jewish settlements, but the portfolio is not considered central to the peace process.

On Sunday Mr. Netanyahu brushed aside demands by another ultra-nationalist hardliner, former army chief Rafael Eitan, for a top cabinet spot, offering him the job as internal security minister along with a second portfolio, sources close to the negotiations said Monday.

The defence minister's job was slated to go to a recently retired general and political newcomer, Yitzhak Mordechai, who only joined the Likud Party earlier this year after reportedly being rebuffed by the Labour Party.

The foreign ministry will return to David Levy, a relative political moderate who held the post from 1990-1992 under the previous Likud administration, the sources said.

Mr. Levy and Mr. Eitan would also get the largely symbolic title of deputy prime minister, they said.

The winner of the important finance minister's job was still a topic of speculation Monday with several possible candidates, including former Justice Minister Dan Meridor and Jerusalem's Israeli mayor, Ehud Olmert. Both Likud officials who were due to see Mr. Netanyahu Monday evening.

The respected governor of Israel's central bank, Yaakov Frenkel, was also considered a potential choice for the finance job.

Other cabinet posts were being distributed primarily to leaders of orthodox and ultra-orthodox religious parties whose support is crucial to Mr. Netanyahu's effort to build a workable majority in the Knesset, Israel's 120-seat parliament.

(Continued on page 7)

Hebron closed down after 2 settlers killed

HEBRON (Agencies) — The Israeli army closed the central produce market in Hebron on Monday in a bid to prevent a flare-up of violence following the overnight killing of two Jews from the nearby settlement of Kiryat Arba.

"The market has been closed until further orders for security reasons," an army spokesman said.

The market is located near neighbourhoods which are home to some 400 radical Jewish settlers and is often closed by the army in periods of tension between the two communities.

Palestinian sources said Israeli soldiers stopped and questioned Palestinians in Hebron on Monday and arrested several men.

Israeli Radio said Monday's clampdown was linked to the shooting late Sunday of a settler couple from Kiryat Arba as they drove on an isolated road inside Israel but near the West Bank.

Police said unknown gunmen opened fire on their car with automatic weapons, killing the man and wife but missing their nine-month-old baby who was in the car.

Police spokesman Erich Bar-Chen said a criminal motive for the shooting could not be ruled out but that the most likely hypothesis was a nationalist attack by Palestinian militants.

Early this year two Israeli soldiers were killed in a similar late-night shooting on a road north of Hebron.

The attack was blamed on militants of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a left-wing movement opposed to Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) peace agreements.

Hebron Mayor Mustafa Natshe condemned the attack, which he said "threatens the promised Israeli redeployment" from the West Bank city.

"Nothing proves however that the attack was carried out by residents of Hebron," he said.

Under the Oslo peace accords, Israel was to hand over four-fifths of Hebron to the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in March, but the pullback was postponed by outgoing Labour Prime Minister Shimon Peres after a series of suicide bombings in Israel.

Right-wing Prime Minister-elect Benjamin Netanyahu has not said whether he would follow through with the redeployment.

The couple killed Sunday was buried Monday in a cemetery in the neighbouring Gush Etzion settlement bloc. The ceremony drew some 5,000 people, many of whom blamed the peace policies of the outgoing government for continued attacks and said Mr. Netanyahu's harder line would help prevent violence.

The gunmen fired between 15 and 20 bullets from automatic weapons at the Ungers'.

(Continued on page 7)

Britain reviews defence issues with S. Arabia

DUBAI (R) — Britain has discussed with its key arms customer Saudi Arabia several defence issues including Saudi plans to buy up to 200 main battle tanks, Western diplomats in the kingdom said on Monday.

They said the head of the British Defence Export Services Organisation, Charles Masefield, held talks on Sunday with Saudi Defence Minister Prince Sultan in the Red Sea Port of Jeddah.

A British embassy official would only say that a "full range of defence issues were discussed."

Western diplomats said Mr. Masefield was believed to have rallied support for British Main Battle Tank (MBT) Maker Vickers, which is seeking to conduct trials in the kingdom with its challenger Two MBT.

"The tank order was among the top issues discussed," one diplomat said.

France's state-owned Giat Industries conducted similar trials last year with its Leclerc tank. The United States' General Dynamics also competing for the order.

Andrew Green, Britain's ambassador to Saudi Arabia since April, is a non-executive director of Vickers.

The embassy official said the visit was Mr. Masefield's first this year to Saudi Arabia, a key regional importer of weapons. British Defence Secretary Michael Portillo had visited Saudi Arabia in March for similar talks.

Britain has 114 joint ventures in Saudi Arabia, with a total capital of 3.4 billion riyals (\$906 million), 1994 figures show.

Since the mid-1980s Saudi Arabia and Britain concluded arms deals worth more than \$30 billion for a variety of sophisticated weapons including ships and aircraft.

Other than the tank order, British firms are in the running for several Saudi deals including mis-

siles, a plan to replace ageing warplanes and other lucrative commercial orders.

Asked whether Prince Sultan gave Mr. Masefield any assurances that Saudi Arabia was not discriminating against British firms over London's decision to grant Saudi dissident Mohammad Al-Masari leave to stay for four years, the embassy official said: "The Masari issue was not raised."

"We have received Saudi assurances and there is no need for more assurances," he added.

Mr. Masari's continued presence in Britain had raised fears London would lose multi-billion-dollar deals with Riyadh, a major trading partner and key arms customer.

But British officials have repeatedly said that high-ranking Saudi officials had assured London that British firms would not be excluded from bidding for contracts in the kingdom, the world's largest oil producer and exporter.

An embassy official said last month at least four British firms had won Saudi deals since the Masari controversy began.

In the latest deal, Davy International — owned by Taffalgar House, part of Norwegian technology and engineering group Kvaerner A/S, said last week it had won an order for a 1.1 million tonnes per year direct reduction iron plant in Saudi Arabia worth more than \$160 million.

The Financial Times newspaper on Friday said documents showed that British civil engineering contractors had been excluded by Saudi Aramco from bidding for oil and gas projects.

But Saudi Oil Minister Ali Ben Ibrahim Al Nuaimi was on Sunday quoted as denying Aramco was keeping British firms out of its projects.



AMBUSH VICTIM: Israeli army medics on Monday rush a wounded soldier to a waiting helicopter at an air force base near the Lebanese border, after he was evacuated from the site of a Hizbollah attack in South Lebanon. Reports from Lebanon said five soldiers were killed and eight wounded. The soldiers were on their way to an outpost in the central sector of the Israeli occupation zone after a night patrol when they were ambushed (see story on page 1)

Turkish politics will affect Cyprus - Clerides

NICOSIA (R) — Political instability in Turkey could hinder developments on the deadlocked Cyprus problem, Glafcos Clerides, president of the divided island, said on Monday.

Mr. Clerides, speaking on the eve of Tuesday's meeting with U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali in Geneva, said the situation in Turkey does not give rise to optimism that positive developments could be expected in the near future.

The island has been divided since a Turkish invasion in 1974, sparked by a short-lived coup engineered by the military junta ruling Greece at the time.

United Nations-led efforts to reunite the island as a bicomunal bizonal federation have failed to produce results.

"Judging by the situation which prevails in Turkey and the non-presence of a stable government I believe it will be very difficult to expect any radical developments in the near future," Mr. Clerides told reporters before his departure for Geneva.

Mr. Clerides said he was not optimistic that "the Turkish side will take those decisions

one would expect ... for the path to open for a solution to the Cyprus problem".

Recently Rauf Denkash, the Turkish Cypriot leader who leads a breakaway Turkish Cypriot enclave which declared independence in 1983, urged Mr. Clerides to go to the negotiating table.

The Turkish Cypriot enclave in the north is recognised only by Ankara. Mr. Denkash met Mr. Ghali last week in Istanbul. He expressed optimism that a new United Nations representative on Cyprus would be able to resolve the problem.

Former South Korean Foreign Minister Han Sung-Joo was recently appointed Mr. Ghali's special representative on Cyprus.

He is expected to visit the island towards the end of June or beginning of July.

The Greek Cypriot side says it will go to talks only if common ground is found on basic issues of the Cyprus problem, the most important being security for the island's inhabitants.

Next week Mr. Clerides will meet U.S. President Bill Clinton in Washington, and a day later, British Prime Minister John Major in London.

Turkey weighs \$600m deal with Israel on upgrading warplanes

TEL AVIV (R) — Turkey, facing Arab and Muslim ire over military ties with Israel, is considering a \$600 million deal with the Jewish state to upgrade Phantom fighter-bombers, Israeli defence officials said.

An official who declined to be identified said that a Turkish delegation had been in Israel to discuss the proposal, under which ageing Phantom jets would be modernised with enhanced electronics and other systems.

"The deal is yet to be closed, in part because Turkey is asking for financing from an Israeli bank, and the loan has not been arranged," the official told Reuters on Sunday. He said that was nearly all that remained to be completed.

The defence officials said the visiting Turks were taken up in an Israeli Lavi fighter in which advanced radar and other electronic systems were demonstrated. The Lavi project was discontinued in the mid-1980s.

Syria, Egypt and Saudi Arabia on Saturday demand-

ed that Ankara reconsider its military accord with Israel under which Israeli air force planes have reportedly flown training missions over Turkey.

Ankara has tried to play down the importance of the accord, which has prompted sharp criticism and fears that the pact, signed in February by the government of outgoing Prime Minister Shimon Peres, signalled an Israeli-Turkish alliance against Syria and other countries in the region.

Last week Israel's deputy army chief visited Turkey, calling for closer military ties.

"The Arab World has been closing ranks in its policies toward Israel as the government of hardline Likud Prime Minister-elect Benjamin Netanyahu takes form."

Arab leaders, concerned over Netanyahu's rejection of Mr. Peres' policy of trading occupied Arab land for peace, plan to meet in Cairo this month for the first pan-Arab summit since 1990.

NEWS IN BRIEF

4 killed, 3 injured in Iran plane crash

TEHRAN (AFP) — An Iran Air Boeing 727 crashed during a training flight in northern Iran killing four people and injuring the three others on board, the newspaper per Hamshahri reported on Monday. The accident occurred Sunday at Pir Bazar, near Rasht airport in Gilan province. The newspaper said all seven people on board were pilots and two of the injured were in critical condition. The official news agency IRNA earlier reported only one death. The authorities are investigating the crash.

Deby pledges fair presidential run-off

NDJAMENA (AFP) — Chadian President Idriss Deby, the winner of the first round of presidential elections a week ago, said the run-off against southerner Abdul Kader Wadal Kamougue would be "totally open" and fair. Mr. Kamougue has challenged the validity of the first round result in which Mr. Deby was credited with 48 per cent against 11 per cent for himself. He and 13 other candidates said Friday that the poll was riddled with "fraud and irregularities." Mr. Kamougue is a man who knows politics and he is a patriot, Mr. Deby said in a statement to AFP Sunday. He said he hoped Mr. Kamougue would "rise above all other considerations to allow democracy to triumph and make sure Chad does not return to its former deplorable situation." The remark was apparently an allusion to 20 years of civil war marked by numerous regional rebellions and also to the fact that Mr. Kamougue drew most of his support from the mainly Christian southwest while the Muslims in central and eastern Chad gave their votes to Mr. Deby. The president said he hoped the 13 other candidates would "accept the rules of democracy in which there is a winner and a loser and that they will accept the verdict of the ballot box." In a statement issued Sunday, Mr. Kamougue called the result of the first round "a political hold-up" and vowed to "bring legal action to have the poll invalidated." The second round is due to go ahead on June 23.

Japan gives \$7.4 million to Djibouti

DJIBOUTI (AFP) — The Japanese government has granted 811 million yen (\$7.4 million) to Djibouti for water supply projects in villages, Radio Djibouti reported Sunday. An agreement on the funding was signed in Paris by Djibouti's ambassador to France, Ahmed Omar Farah, and his Japanese counterpart Koichiro Matsuura, it said.

Egyptian, U.S. troops start exercises

CAIRO (AP) — Egyptian and U.S. troops started 36 hours of military exercises on Monday in the Red Sea, including waters off the Halaib enclave, which is claimed by both Sudan and Egypt. The manoeuvres, named Eagle Salute, included mock naval clashes and exercises to provide air cover for ships and to simulate attacks on coastal targets, Egyptian military sources said. Egypt purchases most of its weapons from the United States and the two countries regularly hold military manoeuvres. Egypt sent four F-16 fighters, two helicopters, two early-warning planes and several destroyers and frigates. The U.S. Navy is participating with several destroyers. Bahrain has sent observers, the sources said. The manoeuvres extended from Egypt's border with Sudan north to Safage, which is 470 kilometres south-east of Cairo. Those waters are adjacent to Halaib, a desolate border region which was the site of clashes between Egypt and Sudan last year. Both countries claim the region.

Kuwait jails captain for attempted rape

KUWAIT (R) — A Kuwaiti police captain has been jailed for five years for abducting and attempting to rape an American woman, a newspaper said on Monday. "A Kuwaiti civil investigation department captain received a five year prison sentence for abduction and attempted rape of an American woman," the English-language Arab Times said. The captain in 1994 ordered the woman to stop her car and accompany him to the police station after telling her it was illegal to use her U.S. driving licence in Kuwait, it said. He then took her to his residence, locked the door and attempted to rape her, it added. "She managed to get away from him after two hours of being sexually harassed," said the paper. It quoted the woman as saying: "I reminded him over and over that my friends are expecting me and would be looking for me." Attempts by the captain's family and colleagues failed to convince the woman to drop the charges, said the paper, which gave no further details.

French businessmen discuss increased ties with Iraq

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Representatives of French firms met with Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz and discussed "the need to reestablish cooperation between the two countries," the Iraqi press said.

During the meeting Mr. Aziz "paid homage to the efforts of our French friends to support the Iraqi position and the fair demand for a lifting of sanctions, and called for further intensive efforts to force the U.N. Security

Council to lift the oil embargo as soon as possible," the papers said.

The Iraqi minister discussed "the joint cooperation which has always linked Iraq and France, and underlined the need to reestablish the links to past levels in the interest of both countries," the papers added.

The French delegation arrived here Friday for a six-day visit — the first since the May 20 agreement

with the U.N. allowing Iraq to export \$2 billion of oil every six months to raise money for its humanitarian needs.

Gilles Munier, delegation spokesman, said it was "interested in exporting food and medicine, although he has not said which firms were represented."

Mr. Munier, secretary general of the Franco-Iraqi economic cooperation association, said the delegation met Sunday with

commerce ministry officials and the president of the National Assembly, Saadoun Hammadi.

Iraqi Oil Minister Amer Rasheed said in Paris on Sunday that Iraq hopes to strike deals with French companies in the coming days.

Speaking after talks with French officials and business leaders, he said that Iraq would give priority to countries which had backed the lifting of sanctions in striking deals in the future.

"Friendly countries which supported us, like France and Russia, will certainly take priority when it comes to signing contracts," he told AFP in an interview.

"Over the next few days I will meet French oil companies as well as other businesses... I hope to revitalise our relations," added the minister, whose four-day visit continued with talks at the French foreign ministry Monday.

France has been a key supporter of a lifting of the

oil export ban on Iraq imposed after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990.

Baghdad is already in negotiations with French oil firms Total and ELF on exploiting Iraqi oilfields.

On Tuesday Mr. Rasheed is scheduled to attend a meeting of French business leaders organised by the employers' organisation CNPF, according to Iraqi sources.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 77111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

15:00 Iria
15:30 Captain Planet
15:45 Hot Shots
16:10 The Bomb Morrison Show
16:30 Comedy — ALF
17:00 News Flash
17:02 Only
17:15 Magazine — La Vie Devant Moi
17:30 Que Le Meilleur Gagne
18:00 Magazine — Savoir Plus Sante
18:30 1996 European Championship: Italy vs. Russia
19:15 Le Journal
19:30 Comedy — Bloom
20:50 Milner-Fenwick (Medical)
21:05 Varieties
21:10 Star Trek
22:00 News in English
22:35 Daily summary — Japan Week
23:35 Feature film — "The Face of Fear"
23:45 My Two Wives

PRAYER TIMES

03:50 Fajr
05:25 (Sunrise) Duha
12:35 Dhuhr
16:15 Asr
19:45 Maghreb
21:19 'Isha

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WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
Relative warm weather conditions will prevail with winds easterly to light to moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate

and sea calm.

Min./Max. temp.
Amman 19/25
Aqaba 24/40
Dhahran 18/37
Jordan Valley 23/40

Yesterday's high temperature:
Amman 33, Aqaba 37. Humidity
readings: Amman 23 per cent,
Aqaba 26 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Hisham Kan'an 740286
Dr. Jihad Samour 760818
Dr. Ghaleb Zaidieh 734011
Dr. Khalidoun Asfour 666873
Ferdous pharmacy 770336
Al Asma pharmacy 637055
Naimukh pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yaacoub pharmacy 649945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Naimukh pharmacy 623672
Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:
Dr. Ghazi Ta'anneh 250080
Alquds pharmacy (—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Walid Al Akhras 965743
Khalifah pharmacy 985417

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate 630341
Rescue 199
Fire Brigade 621111, 637777
Blood Bank 617101
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 866390
Public Security Department 63021
Hotel Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Amman Municipality 787111
Complaints 121
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 010230
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 771111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 661100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power
Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 81381/332
Khalid Maternity, J. Amn

64231/6

Alkilah Maternity, J. Amn. 642441/2
Juhul Amman Maternity 642362
Mallat, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 670771
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845645
Al-Mushar Hospital 6672279
The Islamic, Abdali 66612737
Al-Ahli, Abdali 6641646
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 771101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 7711126
Army, Marka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 666100
Amal Hospital 667155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 965199

ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)983323
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)983323
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)983323

IRBID:
Prince Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275
Ibn Al Nafies Hospital (02)371100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)341111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia In-

ternational Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:00 Damascus (RJ)
08:15 Sana'a (RJ)
08:15 Abu Dhabi, Al Ain (RJ)
10:20 Muscat, Dubai (RJ)
10:35 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
17:20 Cairo (RJ)
17:30 London (RJ)
17:40 Frankfurt (RJ)
18:25 Chicago, Amsterdam (RJ)
08:20 Paris (add) (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

09:40 London (BA)
10:15 Cairo (MS)
09:15 Frankfurt (YP)
14:00 Munich, Aleppo (YP)
15:25 Rome (AZ)
16:30 Doha, Damascus (EK)
20:20 Aden (Y)
21:10 Beirut (ME)
02:55 Bucharest (RO)
03:00 Kuwait (KL)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights
09:50 Aqaba (RW)
19:45 Tel Aviv (RW)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:35 Beirut (RJ)
09:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
11:20 Aqaba, Paris (add) (RJ)
12:10 Aqaba, Vienna, Frankfurt (RJ)
12:15 Amsterdam, Montreal, Toronto (RJ)
12:30 Aqaba, Paris (RJ)
13:15 Cairo (RJ)
14:05 Brussels, London (RJ)
14:55 Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
21:10 Larnaca (RJ)
21:20 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
22:05 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
22:30 Kuala Lumpur, Singapore (RJ)
01:50 Damascus (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

09:15 London (BA)
10:15 Cairo (MS)
09:15 Frankfurt (YP)
14:00 Munich (YP)
15:25 Rome (AZ)
16:30 Doha (EK)
20:20 Aden (Y)
21:10 Beirut (ME)
02:55 Bucharest (RO)
03:00 Kuwait (KL)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights
09:50 Aqaba (RW)
19:45 Tel Aviv (RW)

HUAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:30 every Monday

Dep. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apricot 180 / 600
Apple 700 / 600
Banana 600/600
Banana (Mukammal) 250/250
Banana (imported) 250/300
Cabbage 80 / 40
Carrot 170/100
Cauliflower 180/140
Cucumber (large) 100/70
Cucumber (small) 160 / 100
Eggplant 240 / 80
Garlic 600/400
Garlic (green) 270/100
Lemon 630/450
Marrow (large) 150 / 100
Marrow (small) 240 / 150
Mulakhiyah 170/110
Onion (dry) 150/80
Okra 150/80
Orange 370/300
Peach 680/450
Pepper (hot) 360 / 260
Pepper (sweet) 420/300
Potato 260/160
String Bean 500 / 340
Tomato 140/90
Water melon 120 / 80

Euro-Islam Conference stresses common value structures

Special to the Jordan Times

MAFRAQ — Echoing a conciliatory and generally optimistic tone, the Second Euro-Islam Conference commenced its deliberations at Al al-Bayt University on Monday with the participation of prominent scholars and intellectuals. The four-day conference (June 10-13) is organised by Al al-Bayt University in cooperation with the universities of Lund and Uppsala of Sweden.

Deputising for His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan was former Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, who delivered a speech addressing the problems of contemporary Muslims, cautioning against baseless "Islamophobia" and prejudices in general, recalling historical times such as the Andalusian period in Spain when great tolerance and harmony existed between the ruling majority Muslims and minority populations of both Christians and Jews.

Opening the talks was Al al-Bayt University President, Mohammed Adnan Bakht, followed by keynote addresses from the Swedish government, the European Union, and United Nations Educational

Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). Additionally, a speech was delivered on behalf of Senator Dr. Nassereddin Al-Assad entitled "Means of Mutual Understanding and Respect."

An ambassador at the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ingemar Karlsson, talked at length on "how can mutual tolerance and respect be promoted", citing the example of the 250,000 Muslims residing in Sweden out of a total national population of approximately 9 million. His speech reflected a wish that Islam could, with time, come to be recognised as a feature of Swedish life, instead of an intrusion onto the non-Muslim society of Sweden where "mosques may one day become just as ordinary a sight there as churches are in Aleppo."

Migrating Muslims, on the other hand, must be ready to assimilate with local society much more readily than has so far been the case, and must abandon their scorn for Western societies in general as well as a collective sense of self-righteousness that prevents them from integrating properly and harmoniously. Muslims had, historically, almost always lived as

majorities everywhere they were. Now, however, some of them live as minorities in Europe, often leading to insecurities and the subsequent inclination towards ethnocentrism, isolation and inflexibility vis-a-vis the host society. Ambassador Karlsson said such a conduct could not be met with empathy in Sweden, and stressed that such factors inevitably influence Western countries' policies on immigration with regard to Muslims. Moreover, "subversive activities" staged from Swedish soil by Muslims aimed at either the host country or the immigrants' countries of origin could not be tolerated.

Prominent Algerian scholar Mohammed Al-Milli has delivered a speech on "Misunderstanding between Europe and Islam" in which he made arguments against the proposal put forth by political scientist Samuel Huntington, that with the demise of communism and the threat of Islamism in most parts of the world, an eventual clash of civilisations was imminent between Islam and the West.

"What should this conference be all about" was the title of the speech of Indian

Supreme Court Judge Sona Khan. She highlighted the importance of human rights and liberties in Islam and especially as pertains to women. Citing that a universal bill of (basic human) rights was only drafted as recently as 1948/49, Dr. Khan highlighted the fact that Islam had, long ago via the Holy Koran, granted rights that are only just being granted now by sophisticated contemporary society in the form of secular draft legislation, charters, bills, resolutions, etc.

Following the conclusion of the presentation of working papers, participants and guests were invited to Amman for a sightseeing tour that included the Abdullah Bin Al Hussein Mosque and the Orthodox Church. This was followed by a reception at the Swedish Embassy, dinner at the Kan Zaman restaurant, and a Euro-Arab jazz concert in the Roman Amphitheatre in downtown Amman, before returning to Al al-Bayt University.

The conference was moderated by Dr. Ihsan Mahasneh and attended by the Swedish ambassador in Amman. It also included members of both the Islamic and Christian clergy.

Japan to invest \$76 million in tourism in four years

AMMAN (Petra) — Japan is to finance tourism projects worth \$76 million in the coming four years in Amman and four other areas of the Kingdom designed to help absorb 2.4 million tourists annually by the year 2010, the Ministry of Tourism said in an announcement.

The announcement, made Monday by Ministry Secretary General Akram Masarweh, came at the end of a seminar on tourism organised at the Amman Chamber of Trade within the framework of Japan Week in Jordan which focused its attention on a study conducted by the Japan International

Cooperation Agency (JICA).

Mr. Masarweh said that the ministry last week received a JICA experts' report which gave details of the projects that are to be carried out at downtown Amman, Salt, Karak, Madaba and along the Ghor-Dead Sea Road.

He said that the report would have to be submitted to the Council of Ministers before work on the projects can begin, adding that the work on these projects could be carried out simultaneously within four years.

The two-member JICA team of experts who prepared the study under-

lined the need for Jordan to give due attention to the development of other areas of tourism other than the main attractions of Jerash, Petra and Aqaba. They told the meeting that there was need for creating tourism marketing centres and to accord due attention also to the production of tourism items that can boost the tourism industry and to develop ancient castles.

The JICA report, financed by the Japanese government and carried out between December 1994 and March 1996 will be implemented by the Ministry of Tourism in cooperation with the other concerned institutions.



Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Saleh Irsheidat Monday meets with Petra Region Development Board and announces plans for projects to improve services in Petra

Irsheidat announces plans for projects to improve services at Petra, other sites

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Saleh Irsheidat said Monday that the ancient city of Petra and its surrounding areas will next year witness major infrastructure and services projects designed to provide better facilities for the growing number of visitors.

The announcement came one day after a study discussed within the framework of the Japan week in Amman pointed to the lack of infrastructural services at tourists sites, adding that Jordan needs to improve such services if it is to have a bigger share of the fiercely competitive international tourism market.

The study also pointed to what it called a dearth of educational materials on the history of the ancient sites in the Kingdom even though the majority of the tourists who come to Jordan do so for cultural rea-

sons. Addressing a meeting in his office for the Petra Region Development Board (PRDB), Dr. Irsheidat said that some projects are being financed by international organisations and donor nations with the US Agency for International Development (USAID) providing \$14 million to finance the improvement of services for tourists.

The Ministry of Tourism has given its consent to a request by the Wadi Mousa Municipality to enlist the help of local contractors to carry out a general cleanliness campaign in and around the ancient site, and granted this municipality a JD 40,000 and the neighbouring Taybeh Municipality JD 20,000 to finance this project within their areas, said the minister.

He said the ministry will soon announce a tender for

the construction of pavements and pedestrian alleys on the two sides of the main road leading from the Petra tourists centre towards the centre of Wadi Mousa and will appoint a team of qualified personnel to carry out organisational schemes in the area, according to Dr. Irsheidat.

The minister announced that Dar Al Handasa, a Jordanian consultancy firm, has now completed a seven-month study of the Petra region and submitted a report about the various uses of lands within the Petra region which are estimated to be 900 square kilometres and the Petra wildlife reserve, estimated to be 300 square kilometres in area.

He said that the study pinpoints areas which can be used for tourism, residential, industrial, handicraft and recreational purposes. Speaking at the meeting

engineer Qusai Qreishat, secretary general of the Ministry of Water and Irrigation, said that his office will complete a study and prepare designs for a sewerage and water networks for Wadi Mousa town later this Summer prior to announcing a tender for their implementation probably in October. He added that the project will take two years to complete.

An earlier report by the Ministry of Tourism said that 122,300 tourists visited Jordan in the first quarter of 1996, most of whom visited Petra along with other ancient sites.

Ministry officials were quoted by Reuters as saying that due to the growing number of tourists who arrive at Petra, the Jordanian authorities might require tourists to book in advance for visiting the ancient site.

Prince Firas opens cerebral palsy treatment centre

IRBID (J.T.) — HRH Prince Firas Bin Ra'd has inaugurated a centre for the treatment of cerebral palsy cases, which is affiliated to the Hartha Charitable Society in the Irbid Governorate, established in cooperation between the society and the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development (QAF).

The centre, which includes a clinic and other facilities for treatment, is provided with the necessary equipment and manned by qualified staff who will provide the public and the relatives of children who have cerebral palsy conditions with counsel and guidance on helping them.

The centre, according to Jordan Television, offers treatment for children under the age of 10.

In a statement at the inauguration ceremony, Prince Firas thanked the charitable and non-governmental organisations in Jordan for their role in helping in the rehabilitation of handicapped children and others with special needs to become useful members of society. He expressed appreciation of the Hartha Society for its humanitarian



HRH Prince Firas Bin Ra'd efforts.

Later, Prince Firas toured the society's other sections and examined their functions and services to the local community in general and the women and children in particular.

He also visited an exhibition which displayed embroideries, ceramics and other handicrafts which were produced by the local women members of the Hartha Society.

After the tour, Prince Firas distributed diplomas to the women graduates from the society's training centre who completed courses in dress-making and tricot.

Parliamentary delegation leaves for France

AMMAN (Petra) — A Jordanian parliamentary delegation led by Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Saad Hayel Srour leaves for Paris today on an official two-day visit to France at the invitation of the President of the French National Assembly Philippe Seguen.

Mr. Srour, who is accompanied by a five-member delegation, said in a statement on the eve of the visit that his talks will cover French-Jordanian relations in general and parliamentary affairs in particular as well as the latest developments in the Middle East region, and France's role at the European and international levels to solve the region's problems in addition to Jordanian-European relations.

"We are looking forward with confidence to France's contributions towards cooperating with Jordan in different fields and towards its continued efforts to help establish a lasting peace in our region," said Mr. Srour.

Saying that the Jordanian delegation will hold talks with leaders of the French National Assembly's vari-

ous committees, Mr. Srour said that the talks will cover future cooperation between the two parliaments in boosting European aid to the Kingdom and in further strengthening Franco-Jordanian relations.

Mr. Srour said that the talks in Paris will be a follow-up to those held by Mr. Seguen during his visit to Jordan last January at the head of a French parliamentary team.

Commenting on the coming visit, Jordan's ambassador to France Sharif Fawaz Sharaf said that the invitation of the Jordanian parliamentary delegation reflects the strong relations between Jordan and France at the political, parliamentary and other levels and manifests the French Leadership's keenness on maintaining continued coordination with Jordan in all matters of common concern.

Accompanying Mr. Srour on the visit are deputies Salem Zawaideh, Fawzi Tumeih, Toujan Faisal, Taha Hababbeh and Bassam Emroush.

Shortage in poultry meat persists until more storage facilities are built — official

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan lacks sufficient number of modern slaughter houses for poultry and cold storage facilities for the poultry meat at a time when the country's poultry farms are gradually increasing production, according to Ibrahim Abu Ateille, head of the Ministry of Agriculture's Livestock Department.

Mr. Abu Ateille said the Kingdom's two operational slaughterhouses have a capacity of meeting up to 30 per cent of the population's demand on poultry meat. He said plans are underway for establishing two others which could start work by the end of the year. But the market demand for poultry meat would not be met even after the completion of the new facilities, he said.

Most consumers outside Amman and other main towns purchase poultry at small stores which sell live chickens slaughtered and

cleaned on the spot, according to Mr. Abu Ateille.

However, shortages of poultry meat are usually covered through imports.

Shortages, he added, started to appear in 1989 when the Ministry of Supply had to import 14,000 tonnes and in 1995 the private sector merchants replaced the Ministry of Supply in importing poultry meat.

Jordan's poultry farms last year produced a total of 107,600 tonnes of poultry meat and nearly 860 million eggs, of which 8.5 million were exported, said Mr. Abu Ateille.

He stressed that without appropriate cold storage facilities for poultry meat and table eggs, the whole marketing process will continue to face difficulties and the country is bound to face shortages of poultry meat from time to time.

Jordan, Britain to mark 50 years of diplomatic relations

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan and Britain are marking the 50th anniversary of full diplomatic relations with an impressive array of commercial and cultural events beginning June 14, the British embassy said Sunday.

Titled "British Lifestyle Exhibition," the week-long events include an exhibition of products from England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, performances of theatrical plays and a music concert as well as a display of paintings by David Roberts.

The events, also called "British Week" in Jordan, are to be staged at the Forte Grand Hotel.

"This year sees an important milestone in the long, historical relationship between the United Kingdom and Jordan," the British embassy said in a press release.

It noted that Jordan celebrated the 50th year of its independence in May, an occasion that also marked the termination of the Anglo-Jordanian treaty.

On June 22, 1946, Sir Alec Kirk-

bride became the British ambassador to Jordan when he presented his credentials to the late King Abdullah, founder of Jordan, it recalled.

The "British Lifestyle Exhibition," said the embassy, "from our point of view, symbolises the importance that the U.K. attaches to her relationship with Jordan."

The event is organised by the Department of Trade and Industry and the commercial section of the British embassy here with support from the British Council.

On the commercial front, the companies displaying their products here — clothing and knitwear, gift ware and pottery, perfumes and toiletries, food and drinks, furniture, fabrics, toys, antiques, stationery and sports equipment — will also be looking for agents in Jordan.

"Some are looking for investment opportunities," said the embassy.

Jordanian and British businessmen have signed an umbrella agreement on institutionalised interaction aimed at increasing awareness of the potential of each and have also held several meetings.

Britain ranks third in terms of exports to Jordan among European Union countries. Its sales to Jordan in 1995 amounted to about JD 125 million (after Germany with JD 218 million and Italy with JD 139 million), according to figures given by the Central Bank of Jordan.

Jordan's exports to the U.K. amounted to JD 4.2 million in 1995.

British investment in Jordan is coming in the form of direct equity participation as well as technical expertise in the tourism industry.

On the cultural front, the events during the week represent some of the "many facets of life which the British and Jordanian people have in common, most importantly, a sense of humour," said the British embassy.

The famous Derek Nimmon Players will perform the comedy "Bedside Manner" starring John Inman while "The Hiss and Boo Company" will present a variety and theatrical entertainment featuring Ruth Maddock.

The opening night will feature the "Best of West End Musicals" and the "Mop Top Beatles" will also perform a concert.

British Ambassador to Jordan Peter Hinchcliffe expressed hope that "as many people as possible will take advantage of this opportunity and see what the United Kingdom can offer."

"For me personally, British Week will mark the culmination of my embassy's efforts to improve the already excellent relations which exist between the U.K. and Jordan in all aspects of the relationship," added the ambassador.

WHAT'S GOING ON

JAPAN WEEK

- * Japanese Arts Exhibitions at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- * Broadcasting of Japanese TV programmes and films on Jordan Television.

JAZZ FESTIVAL

- * Performance by German Jazz band Rabi Abou Khalil Quintet at the Roman Amphitheatre at 9:30 p.m.

FILM

- * "Jip" at Abdul Hammed Shoman Foundation, Jabal Amman at 7:30 p.m.

LECTURE

- * "Resumption of Democratic March in Jordan: A comparison between the Latest Two Parliaments" by Hayel Al Da'jeh at Abdul Hammed Shoman Foundation, Jabal Amman at 6:30 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

- * Works by contemporary Arab artists at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, until June 30.
- * Photograph exhibit by American photographer George Vass entitled "Passage Across the Jordan" at the American Centre, until June 23.
- * Recent works by Ayad Nimer at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, until June 12.

Weekend polls give Yeltsin wide margin of victory

MOSCOW (R) — Opinion polls published in Russia at the weekend showed rising support for President Boris Yeltsin, but the figures do not point to a Yeltsin victory in the first round of voting.

The surveys, from three separate pollsters, gave Mr. Yeltsin support of up to 37 per cent of those questioned, while his Communist rival Gennady Zyuganov had as little as 15.9 per cent.

Other candidates lagged far behind.

Opinion polls have a poor track record in Russia, where people often tell a pollster what they think they should say rather than what they believe. The margin of error is up to four per cent and many voters said they had not made up their minds.

The samples — between 1,067 and 1,600 — are a tiny



Russian President Boris Yeltsin dances during a pop concert as his wife Naina (right) gestures insisting he should leave, in the Siberian city of Novosibirsk Sunday. Mr. Yeltsin is on a pre-election campaign tour around Russia (Reuters photo)

proportion of Russia's 105 million voters.

Mr. Yeltsin said Sunday he was confident of outright victory on June 16. If no candidate wins an overall majority in the first round, a run-off vote will be held next month.

"My intuition tells me there'll be victory in the first round. The people, of course, will decide. Either I do not know my people or this will be the outcome," Mr. Yeltsin said in an interview on NTV commercial television channel.

Two of the surveys also asked about voters' intentions in a second-round ballot.

Pollsters Vision, who questioned 1,600 Russian voters, said 52 per cent of those surveyed would vote for Mr. Yeltsin in a second round, compared to 36 per cent who would back Mr. Zyuganov.

A Romir survey of 1,500 voters showed that 49 per cent would back Mr. Yeltsin in a run-off vote while 31 per cent would back Mr. Zyuganov.

The third survey, for pollsters Cessi, was conducted for CNN television and the English-language Moscow Times newspaper. It questioned 1,067 voters.

Eleven candidates were registered for the poll, but one — Communist Amman Tuleyev, has already said he will withdraw.

The other main contenders are liberal economist Grigory Yavlinsky, extreme nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, retired General Alexander Lebed, eye surgeon Svyatoslav Fyodorov and former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev.

Meanwhile of the six million ethnic Russians living in Kazakhstan out of a population of 17 million only 10,000 have the right to vote in Russia's June 16 presidential poll.

Descended from colonial adventurers, peasant settlers and Soviet deportees, Russians form a majority in northern regions close to the 5,000 kilometre frontier running from the Caspian Sea across Siberia to the Altai Mountains.

But now, thanks to a stroke of Stalin's pen and a catch-22 citizenship trap, they are on the wrong side of the border and unable to meet residency terms needed to get a Russian passport.

Their country is part of what is known in Russia as the "near abroad" of former Soviet satellite states.

"Between 25 and 30 million Russians in the 'near abroad' have found out that they are foreigners against their will," Slav activist Nikolai Ivanov, 47, told Reuters in the northern Kazakhstan city of Ust-Kamenogorsk.

In Ust-Kamenogorsk, founded as a Soviet fort in 1920 and run in Soviet days as a smelter metallurgical centre, ties to Moscow ran deep. Ethnic Russians make up nearly two-thirds of the one million population in the east Kazakhstan region.

But Alexander Shushanikov, regional head of suspended Slavic umbrella organisation LAD, said even those with passports may be unable to vote because there will be no polling stations in the border region.

4 killed in Italy hydrofoil accident

NAPLES, Italy (R) — A hydrofoil packed with commuters struck rocks and capsized off a small island in southern Italy Monday, killing at least four people and injuring many others, port authorities said.

The hydrofoil ferry had about 150 passengers and 15 crew on board when it smashed into rocks in thick fog off the island of Procida as it headed towards the nearby port city of Naples.

The survivors swam to shore or were picked up by fishing boats and pleasure craft in the port.

Divers recovered the bodies of four elderly Italians from the waters, port officials and island police said. They were continuing the search for other victims.

Most of the passengers were treated by medical crews on the docks and at the island's small hospital.

The hydrofoil was operated by the Suav ferry company which runs regular services between Naples and the islands of Capri, Ischia and Procida, as well as popular coastal resorts.

Chun pleads ignorance in arrest of politicians without warrant in 1980

SEOUL (AFP) — Jailed former President Chun Doo-hwan testified Monday that he was unaware that scores of opposition politicians and students activists were arrested without warrant under martial law in 1980.

"I didn't know then that politicians and others who had illegally amassed fortunes were arrested without warrant," Mr. Chun told the Seoul District Criminal Court, but added that martial law allowed arrest without warrant.

The 65-year-old former South Korean head of state was answering defence questions in the 12th session of his drawn-out trial on mutiny and treason charges in connection with the 1979 coup and subsequent massacre of civilians in 1980.

He and a second jailed former president, Roh Tae-woo, face an ultimate sentence of death if convicted of the charges.

Mr. Chun also pleaded ignorance of a plan under which more than 700 journalists were purged, telling the court "I never instructed anyone to draft such a plan, nor was I aware of the plan."

Later, the former army general said, he was given to understand that the journalists' purge was "sort of standard operating procedure" in the event of martial law.

Throughout the trial Mr. Chun has argued that he and his 11 co-defendants acted to

prevent a power-push by another group of generals in the political vacuum following the assassination of former President Park Chung-hee.

The extension of martial law (in May 1980) was decided and approved by then acting head of state Choi Ju-hwa, "not me," Mr. Chun said.

"I know there was no pressure or threat on him," said Mr. Chun, who repeated his earlier denials that he had personally ordered the sending of troops to Kwangju to put down the civilian uprising there.

Among the politicians arrested under Mr. Chun's rule were South Korea's current President Kim Young-Sam and opposition leader Kim Dae-Jung.

Kim Young-Sam last year condoned the arrests of Mr. Chun and Mr. Roh on graft charges, and prosecutors said the two former generals had amassed some \$1.5 billion between them while in power from 1980 through 1993.

Under a special law, the two were then charged with mutiny and treason in connection with the coup and the subsequent massacre of civilians by martial law troops in the southern city of Kwangju in 1980.

Some 200 died and another 1,000 were injured by official count when combat troops put down the Kwangju uprising.

Thousands flee fighting in rural Liberia

MONROVIA (AFP) — Liberian factions have clashed for the past two weeks in western areas of the country forcing thousands of civilians to flee, according to witnesses arriving here Monday.

"There is no law and order. Everything is just chaos," said Morris Kiade, one of hundreds of refugees who arrived by canoe from Grand Cape Mount County, where fighting is continuing between the two wings of the ethnically-divided United Liberation Movement (ULIMO).

Some of the canoes reportedly capsized on the way to the capital. One witness, Boimu Funbah, said up to 15 people from one canoe may have drowned.

"People are suffering from bullet wounds and there is nobody to care for them," Mr. Kiade told journalists at Monrovia's Banjo Beach.

Residents in affected areas are "completely out of food and there is no medicine to treat the wounded and sick," said Mr.

Kiade.

"Our people are dying in the bushes. We have never enjoyed peace since (the African Peacekeeping Force) ECOMOG withdrew from the country," he said.

The peacekeepers pulled out of Grand Cape Mount County last March after clashes with the ethnic Krahn wing of ULIMO-Krahn in Tubmanburg, in nearby Boni County, left at least 20 ECOMOG troops dead.

The only road to the western region has since been closed to normal traffic and relief convoys.

Although a ceasefire has held in the capital itself since May 26, after almost two months of factional fighting, banditry and armed robbery are still common in many areas.

On Saturday a group of fighters armed with machetes raided the government-run John Kennedy Memorial Hospital in the Sinkor district and threatened workers.

Mongolia says it has brought fires under control

BEIJING (AFP) — Giant forest fires that ravaged two-thirds of Mongolia over the past three months have been brought under control, but the government has warned the country to stay on high alert for further outbreaks.

"The fires have been stopped but may break out again in some places," General Damdinsuren, vice chairman of the State Standing Emergency Commission, was quoted as saying by the Xinhua News Agency Monday.

The representative of the U.N. Development Programme (UNDP) in Ulan Bator, Jan Swieterring, said Monday that "due to recent rainfall in several fire-affected areas ... the situation is under control."

Of the 383 fires that have broken out in Mongolia since Feb. 23, 352 have been extinguished and 31 are still burning in central and northern areas of the country, the UNDP said in its latest report released Monday.

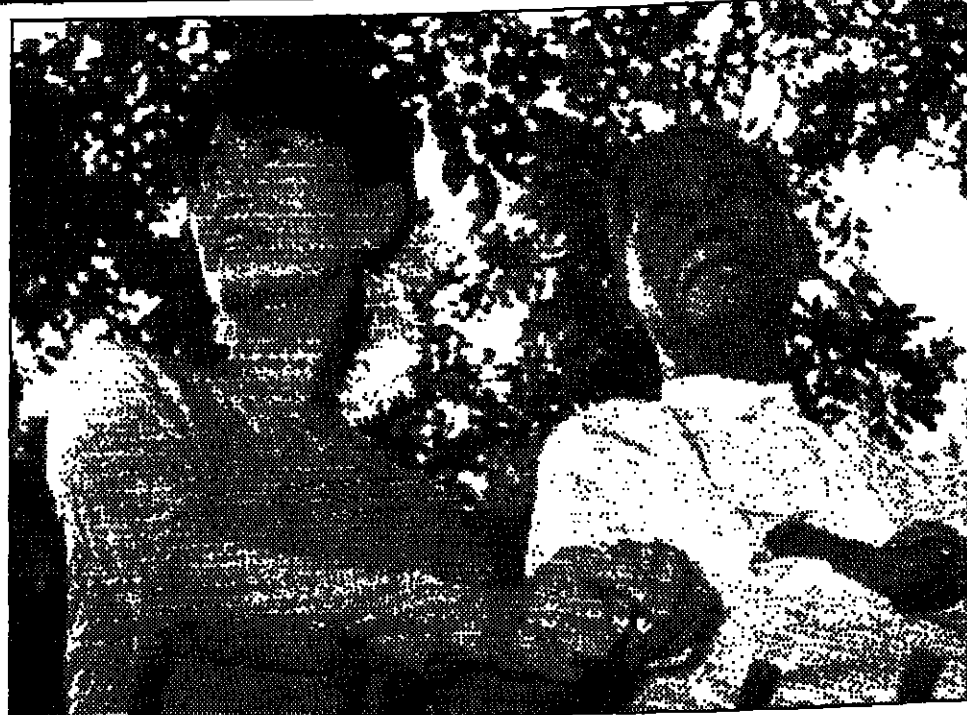
"However, all have been encircled by fire breaks and are basically under control," the report said.

"As there is still a danger for renewed outbreaks of fires, the government has informed all parties to remain on alert, especially as several days of rainfall will be required to minimise the danger of new outbreaks in the concerned areas," it added.

The fires, the worst this century, have claimed 25 lives and injured 61 people, according to the latest figures contained in the UNDP report.

Some 14 of Mongolia's 21 provinces have been affected by the fires, which killed 7,726 head of cattle and left 1,600 people homeless.

A total of almost 102,000 square kilometres (41,000 square miles) of forest and prairie have been affected by the fires, the report said.



Burmese opposition democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi speaks to a crowd of several thousand gathered outside her house in the Burmese capital Sunday. At right is an unidentified supporter (Reuters photo)

Burmese junta warns it is not being lenient towards opposition

RANGOON (AFP) — The Burmese government warned Monday its show of restraint towards opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi and public meetings of her supporters should not be mistaken for leniency.

For two days in a row over the weekend, thousands of people turned out in front of Ms. Suu Kyi's house to hear her speak — with a record crowd of 10,000 people showing up Sunday despite threats of arrest.

Analysts here said the gatherings were in open defiance of a law passed Friday declaring such open meetings unlawful, with violators facing five- to 20-year jail terms, confiscation of property and fines.

Despite the new law, which could effectively shut down the political opposition, the authorities have so far not moved in to disrupt the meetings.

"Before the week's end a law was made in response to the needs of the times, more specifically to act to curb those looking for trouble by making preservation of public order more difficult," the official English-language New Light Of Myanmar said in an editorial.

"Leniency shown should not be taken lightly, much less ignored," it added.

The newspaper also printed pictures of two large billboards which were erected near Ms. Suu Kyi's house Sunday expressing the "desires" of the Burmese people.

The signs, which read "crush all internal and external destructive elements as the common enemy" and "oppose those trying to jeopardise stability," were unveiled in a ceremony attended by Rangoon's mayor and hundreds of people, mainly students from a nearby high school.

"The posters are a reminder of what the people would want to and will do," the editorial said.

Apparently reacting to the huge turnouts in front of Ms. Suu Kyi's house, another editorial said the people of Burma had shown their support for the government by holding huge rallies across the country.

The official press has reported dozens of the rallies taking place since the NLD defied the authorities and went ahead with a party meeting on May 26 despite the detention of 262 of its activists.

Many participants have said that they were forced to attend the rallies, which are also widely broadcast on state television and show large unenthusiastic crowds chanting slogans against "destructive forces."

Ms. Suu Kyi has denounced the pro-government rallies as propaganda, and insists that the gatherings outside her home were

aimed at peace and not disturbing the stability of the state.

"I can say that this meeting is a total success due to the support of the people and the fact that everyone here is very disciplined and orderly," she told the crowd of supporters Sunday.

Another editorial in the New Light Of Myanmar Monday accused the NLD of disturbing the country's peace, saying that students, workers and peasants wanted to proceed with their normal activities.

"There is great public indignation at what the subversives are trying to do," it said, adding that the "public deserves peace and tranquility."

Meanwhile Japan and the United States agreed Monday to seek a regional approach to calming political tensions in Burma although they differed slightly on measures to be taken, Japanese officials said.

Japanese Foreign Minister Yukihiko Ikeda told two U.S. envoys that Tokyo shared Washington's goal of preventing the situation in Burma from deteriorating after the Rangoon military government's crackdown on pro-democracy political forces.

However, Mr. Ikeda told U.S. emissaries William Brown and Stanley Roth that Japan, the United States and members of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) should "each use their own approaches to the brewing turmoil in Rangoon."

"Japan and the United States can join forces on the Burma question, because we share the same concerns and goals even if we differ slightly on concrete measures," a Japanese Foreign Ministry official quoted Mr. Ikeda as saying.

The official did not elaborate on differences on Burma policy between Japan and the United States, both of which have condemned the Rangoon government's crackdown on Ms. Suu Kyi and her National League for Democracy.

Mr. Ikeda told his U.S. visitors that it would not be productive to single out Burma as a political issue in next month's ASEAN regional forum in Indonesia, the official said.

Instead, Tokyo and Washington should take advantage of the July 16-25 gathering in Jakarta of ASEAN foreign ministers and regional dialogue partners to raise the issue on the sidelines, Mr. Ikeda was quoted as saying.

ASEAN groups Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Powerful quake shakes Alaska

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (R) — A powerful earthquake struck offshore near Alaska's Aleutian Islands Sunday, but no damage was reported and officials cancelled a warning of a possible tsunami tidal wave.

The quake, measuring 7.7 on the open-ended Richter Scale, struck at 8:04 p.m. (0404 GMT Monday) about 60 miles (100 kilometres) southwest of the island of Adak, said John Minsch of the U.S. National Earthquake Information Centre in Golden, Colorado.

The quake was felt strongly on the island, home to a U.S. naval air facility, but caused no damage, officials said.

"No damage, no casualties. Everything's normal," said navy Lt. Joe Olsen.

The National Weather Service issued a tsunami warning and watch for the archipelago from Kodiak West to the island of Attu, but lifted it less than two hours after the quake when it became evident the tremor had not triggered any damaging waves.

The quake's epicentre was about 1,250 miles (2,000 kilometres) southwest of Anchorage.

Japan Monday lifted a tidal wave warning issued earlier in the day along its Pacific coast after the powerful earthquake struck offshore near the Aleutian Islands.

The Meteorological Agency lifted the warning at 6:30 p.m. (0920 GMT) Monday, about three hours after it was issued.

"There is no fear of tsunami (tidal waves)," the agency said in a statement. The agency said it had detected no traces of tidal waves hitting the Japanese coast.

It had earlier said the first tidal waves could reach the eastern shores of Japan's northernmost island of Hokkaido, 1,100 kilometres north of Tokyo, at around 5:00 p.m. (0800 GMT).

Meanwhile cool, damp weather helped firefighters tackle five wildfires in Alaska

Sunday but overwhelmed officials were forced to call in reinforcements from as far away as Colorado, officials said.

"Alaska's firefighting resources are stretched to the limit," said Katie Markin, a spokeswoman for the Alaska Division of Forestry.

The massive fires have left a vast trail of charred wilderness and torched homes through the Alaskan wilderness, although drizzle and rain have slowed their advance.

The worst of the fires, the Miller's Reach blaze near Big Lake in central Alaska, has consumed over 14,932 hectares (37,330 acres) of woodlands, burned 344 structures and caused damage estimated at \$9.9 million, said Andy Hutzler, spokesman for the State Division of Forestry.

The fire, which erupted on June 2, forced some 1,800 people to evacuate their homes and there were no official reports on how many have been able to return.

No fire-related injuries have been reported and Mr. Hutzler said that blaze and others in Alaska pose no immediate threat to structures.

Some 1,200 people were fighting the Miller's Reach fire and containment stood at about 60 per cent Sunday with expectations for total containment coming late Monday, Mr. Hutzler said.

"Crews are taking advantage of the cool damp weather to completely extinguish hot spots in the vicinity of homes and within 500 feet of the perimeter," said Ms. Markin.

The second-largest fire was at Crooked Creek south of Anchorage. An estimated 9,200 hectares (23,000 acres) of white spruce forest with a few cabins had gone up in flames there since the fire began June 6.

It was estimated to be 30 per cent contained, said Ms. Markin.

Survey: British kids find Germany big bore

LONDON (R) — British children regard Germany as the most boring country in Europe and think it less attractive to visit than war-torn Bosnia, according to a survey published Monday. The survey of 800 children aged between 10 and 16 showed an anti-German sentiment harking back 50 years, with 78 per cent saying they associated Germany most strongly with World War II. When children were asked which country they would least like to visit, Germany came first with 43 per cent, followed by Bosnia at 26 per cent and France at 20 per cent. Some 57 per cent thought Germany was the most boring country in Europe and the negative view was so strong that almost one-third wrongly believed Germany to be Europe's poorest nation. The survey was commissioned by photocopy and fax manufacturers Gestetner.

French resort bans beggars, curbs dog walkers

MENTON, France (R) — The mayor of the Riviera resort of Menton has banned begging and newspaper vendors from its chic, palm-lined streets, his office said. A decree drafted by Mayor Jean-Claude Guibal also bans the sale of alcoholic drinks in the streets of the town, which is close to the Italian border and famed for its mild climate. It also bans locals walking their dogs from gathering in groups at certain hours, even if the pets are on leashes. Cannes, further west on the Riviera, adopted such measures in 1993 to "preserve the welcome and the quality" of the town.

Deschamps goes fishing, but fails to make a catch

HAYDON BRIDGE, England (R) — Didier Deschamps, captain of France's Euro '96 squad, has admitted defeat in his latest sporting challenge. He had accepted with relish an invitation to go fly-fishing on the banks of the North Tyne River close to the squad's hotel at Chollerford. But after a lengthy period on the banks of the river Deschamps retired without making a catch. "It was not an easy day for the fishing," he said. "I think we were trying to fish for salmon but I did not see any."

Cuba cracks down on resort prostitution

HAVANA (AFP) — Cuba has cracked down on prostitution in its famed Varadero resorts, forcing at least 7,000 young women to return to their homes in the provinces in the past six months. Juvenud Rebelde reported Sunday. Cuban police also investigated 400 homes believed to be brothels and 2,000 car drivers believed involved in prostitution, according to the publication put out by the youth branch of Cuba's Communist Party. Most of the women were removed from the town of just 18,000 people about 140 kilometres east of Havana and returned to their hometowns in eastern and central Cuba. The women plied their trade on bridges, in homes, at the bus station and even in tunnels built by the army to shelter Cubans in the event of a foreign invasion, the publication said. To avoid expulsion, some of the women married local men, the publication said. Night in Varadero had become "unbearable" for the people who lived there and threatened to undermine Varadero's reputation as a tourist paradise, Juvenud Rebelde reported. Police also cracked down on a pornographic movie ring, the weekly reported.



Aslan Maskhadov, the chief commander of the Chechen rebel forces (left) walks into the OSCE commission building as his bodyguard pushes a photographer away in the Ingushetia capital of Nazran Sunday. Russian officials and Chechen separatists have reached an agreement on military issues, including the timetable for the withdrawal of federal troops, Interfax News Agency quoted one of the delegations as saying (Reuters photo)

New Taiwan foreign minister vows no halt to U.N. push

TAIPEI (R) — Taiwan's new foreign minister pledged Monday to maintain his estranged island's push to join the United Nations and raise its profile despite China's fierce opposition.

John Chang, echoing the quiet defiance of predecessor Fredrick Chien, said his ministry would not rule out arranging further foreign travels for President Lee Teng-Hui.

Such visits infuriate Beijing, which regards Taiwan as a rebel-held Chinese province that is not qualified to have independent diplomatic ties.

Chang, addressing reporters after being sworn in to a new cabinet, stressed that Taiwan's republic of China government — though isolated by China and recognised by only 31 countries — is a sovereign whose 21 million people deserve a U.N. Voice.

"We need to push for participation in the United Nations in order to reveal the reality of the Republic of China's existence," Mr. Chang said.

"We also need to let the entire world know that the 'one China' advocated by mainland China is not the People's Republic of China and that mainland China does not exercise jurisdiction power" over Taiwan.

China, which has failed to regain sovereignty over Taiwan since a civil war split them in 1949, exerts tremendous pressure to prevent Taipei from joining major international forums.

Beijing took China's U.N. seat from Taipei in 1971 when Nationalist Chinese Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek was still president of the government in exile on

Taiwan.

The new foreign minister, in a historic footnote, is Mr. Chiang's grandson and the only "Chiang dynasty" descendant active in politics.

Beijing has assailed Taipei's bid to gain a seat in the world body as a conspiracy to promote Taiwan's independence and a betrayal of its purported goal of eventual reunification.

Mr. Chang countered that the policy of self-promotion prepares Taiwan for reunification rather than independence.

"The ultimate goal of our work to push for foreign relations is to seek for the reunification of China. Mainland China should have no false conceptions about our goal," he said.

Despite its diplomatic isolation, Taiwan has strong economic and other informal links with most countries — and wide-ranging business contacts with China itself.

Mr. Chang said President Lee, who has spearheaded Taiwan's efforts to break out of isolation, would continue to visit foreign countries to improve ties.

China reacted with outrage after Mr. Lee made a private visit to the United States in June 1995.

The trip prompted Beijing to freeze what had been warming cross-strait relations and to launch war games and unarmed missile tests in waters near Taiwan in what it acknowledged was a bid to frighten the island away from independence.

China vows to attack Taiwan if it declares independence.

China hails social progress in Tibet

BEIJING (R) — Beijing, under fire from human rights groups and exiled Tibetans for its policies in Tibet, said Monday the restive Himalayan region had made tremendous progress under 40 years of Chinese rule.

Tibetans' living standards had soared to outstrip the national average in some areas, said a survey by the China Tibetology Research Centre conducted from May to November last year on 150 urban, pastoral and agricultural families.

The survey on basic family conditions, relations, family structures, lifestyles, income and expenditure, and religion was the largest and most thorough in Tibet in recent years, the Xinhua News Agency said.

In terms of religion, 93.2 per cent of those surveyed in the deeply Buddhist Himalayan region said they were familiar with the state policy guaranteeing freedom of religion.

With rising living standards, an increasing number of Tibetans were placing more and better religious items in their homes, the survey said.

They were free to hold religious activities anywhere at any time, it said.

The report was published amid a crackdown in Tibet on the display in temples, monasteries, offices, schools and homes of pictures of the region's exiled god-king, the Dalai Lama, and a renewed sweep on anti-Chinese separatists.

The Dalai Lama has lived in India since he fled into exile after a failed effort to throw out the Chinese in 1959, but is still deeply revered throughout Tibet.

The Tibet Daily, in its June 2 edition available in Beijing Monday, said local officials had been reminded that the campaign against pro-independence separatists was a priority.

"The prevention and eradication of the terrorist destructive activities of hostile forces is the new task of the struggle against splittism," the newspaper said.

The degree of attention paid to this struggle by Communist Party cadres reflected their commitment to the correct political line, it said.

Tibet had arrested 187 people, smashed 287 criminal cases and seized 34 guns, 3,724 rounds of ammunition and 164 kilograms of explosives since launching the nationwide "strike hard" crime crackdown in late April, the Procuratorial Daily said.

A court last month sentenced six Tibetans to up to five years in prison for demanding independence.

Chechens say Russians agree to troop pullout from Chechenya

NAZRAN, Russia (AFP) — Chechen rebel officials said they expected to sign an accord Monday on a Russian troop withdrawal from their shattered republic by the end of August, as tough negotiations resumed.

There was no Russian confirmation of the breakthrough reported by the Chechens after almost 12 hours of negotiations in the neighbouring Republic of Ingushetia Sunday.

Talks resumed Monday between commissions headed by Chechen chief of staff Aslan Maskhadov and the commander of Russian troops in Chechenya General Vyacheslav Tikhomirov, Interfax News Agency said.

Mr. Maskhadov said that the Russians had agreed to end blockades of Chechen villages by Tuesday and pull out troops altogether by Aug. 30. The war zone would then be "demilitarised," he said, without giving details.

A troop withdrawal is at the top of the Chechens' demands, but there was still no agreement by late Sunday over what to do about local elections called by pro-Russian authorities in Chechenya.

The Chechens, who have been fighting the Russian army for their tiny Muslim republic's independence since December 1994, have agreed to set aside their demands for immediate inde-



A Chechen couple sift through debris of their home in Goiskoe Monday. The village of Goiskoe was attacked by Russian artillery and aircraft earlier this year. Russian forces destroyed every structure in the village and laced the area with mines and booby-traps in an effort to prevent residents from returning (Reuters photo)

pendence.

However, the rebels warn that holding elections June 16 under the Russian-installed government, which they say has no legitimacy among Chechens, would provoke them into a new round of fighting.

The top Russian negotiator, Nationalities Minister Vyacheslav Mikhailov, was flying to the Chechen capital Grozny to discuss the election issue before returning to the talks in Ingushetia, Interfax said.

The Russians also want the presidential elections to take place in Chechenya on June 16 like everywhere else. This has proved less controversial, with the rebels saying they don't mind Russian citizens and troops in Chechenya voting, but not Chechens.

The talks are also concentrating on freeing the hundreds of people held prisoner by both sides in Chechenya.

On Sunday, the Chechens released two Russian pris-

oners, a soldier and a lieutenant colonel, at the talks site and said another 27 were ready to be handed to the Russians in Chechenya. The Russians said they had freed 14 Chechens.

President Boris Yeltsin, who needed to show the 18-month war has ended ahead of his reelection bid, launched the peace process on May 27 by holding an unprecedented meeting with separatist President Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev at the Kremlin.

UNICEF condemns abuse of women

PARIS (AFP) — Maternal deaths, mutilation, malnutrition, poverty and illiteracy are a woman's daily plight in many parts of the world, according to UNICEF's most recent annual report on the progress of nations.

In a vivid and detailed account, the report focused on women who are denied their right to "education, respect, dignity, leisure time, rest, decent food, a healthy diet, and resources."

Established in 1946 to deliver post-war relief to children, UNICEF now concentrates its activities on improving the quality of life for children and mothers in developing countries.

The 1996 report delved into the physical abuse of women, from female genital mutilation for girls to difficult deliveries in insalubrious conditions.

UNICEF strongly condemned the international community for not applying the "obvious" and immediate solutions which would provide relief to millions of physically-abused women.

"Reducing maternal deaths and injuries is not a matter of possibilities but of priorities," UNICEF said, criticising the international community for its "colossal failure of imagination."

Approximately two million girls are mutilated every year, with Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Somalia and Sudan accounting for 75 per cent of all cases.

Women who have gone through the traditional practice of female genital mutilation are at greater risk than others when expecting a child, the report stated.

According to UNICEF, estimates for 1996 show that the number of women throughout the world who die each year in pregnancy

and childbirth is probably close to 600,000, though for the past decade the figure was estimated at 500,000.

The Paris-based organisation goes on to say that for every woman who dies there are approximately thirty women who suffer from "injuries, infections, and disabilities which are usually untreated and unspoken of."

"It is therefore no exaggeration to say that the issue of maternal mortality and morbidity is in scale and severity the most neglected tragedy of our times," the report concluded.

The report stated that maternal deaths and injuries, often due to ignorance and ill-equipped health units, could be greatly reduced with the introduction of high-quality family planning services.

Physical abuse goes hand in hand with mental abuse, as in many parts of the world a woman is considered a less valuable asset than a man, UNICEF said.

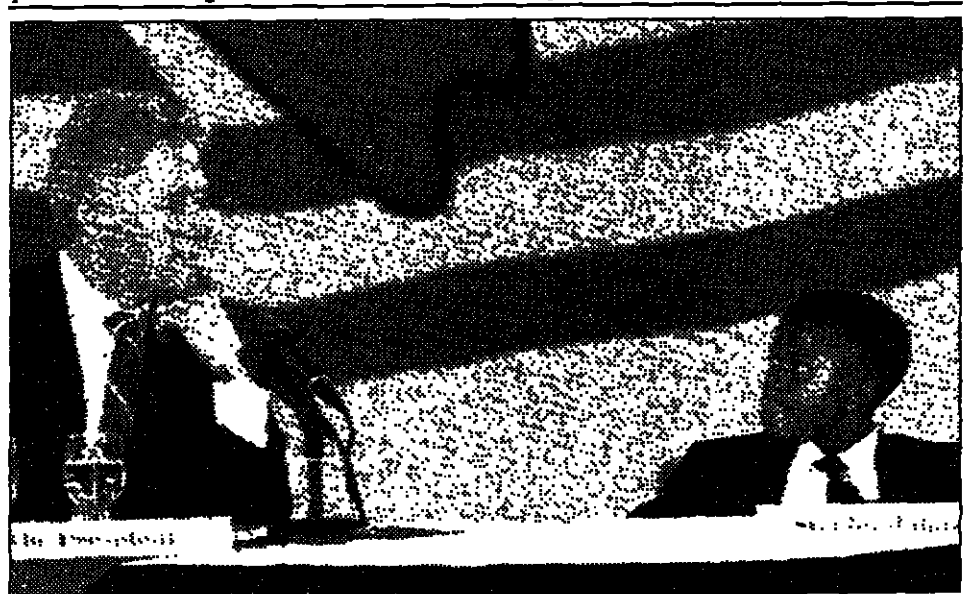
Citing South Asia, the U.N. organisation reported on boys who often get the best treatment: "Sons should be

educated because they will be the breadwinners of their own future families, while a girl's work is considered less likely to bring in monetary income."

Once these women grow up, they become dependent on men and have "neither the means nor the knowledge necessary to act in their best interest and that of their children", the report stated.

Yet even basic primary education goes a long way towards improving women's lives. Education, however basic, is generally followed by a drop in infant mortality, a lower birthrate, wider use of healthcare and contraception, and later marriages.

UNICEF deplored what it considered indifference to women's affairs. "If there were millions of men suffering and dying every year, if millions of men were injured, handicapped and humiliated, if they were being subjected to massive genital lesions then we would have heard about it a long time ago and something would have been done."



President Bill Clinton (left) tries to get an opinion from Stanley Johnson about the Youth and Family Services Centre at the Moyer Student Union at the University of Nevada in Las Vegas. Mr. Clinton is here to see how the youth work programme is working (Reuters photo)

Clinton touts environmental record

SAN FRANCISCO (R) — U.S. President Bill Clinton cast himself Sunday as defender of the nation's national parks and vowed to protect them against Republican attempts to starve them of funds.

Standing at the Presidio, a former military base in San Francisco that is being converted into a national park, Mr. Clinton said: "I have to tell you that ... all of our national parks are at risk. Too many of them have fallen into disrepair."

Making a clear reference to congressional Republicans but without mentioning them by name, Mr. Clinton said there was pressure to privatise or sell off national parks or simply starve them of funds and allow them to decay.

"We have to nourish them. We need to maintain them. We need to improve them. The last thing in the wide world we need to do is get rid of them," Mr. Clinton told a crowd of 300 invited guests at the Presidio, which overlooks the Golden Gate Bridge.

Mr. Clinton was speaking on the first day of a three-day campaign swing that takes him to Nevada, California and New Mexico.

On his 24th visit to the politically crucial state of California, Mr. Clinton was expect-

ed to face demonstrations from members of San Francisco's large homosexual community angered by his opposition to same-sex marriages. But no large-scale protest materialised.

About 200 placard-waving, chanting protesters gathered outside Democratic Sen. Dianne Feinstein's house in a wealthy San Francisco suburb where Mr. Clinton attended a \$50,000-per-plate fundraiser later Sunday evening.

Most of the demonstrators were angry at Mr. Clinton's decision to sign a Republican-sponsored bill before Congress that would allow a state not to recognise same-sex marriages. But others in the crowd were protesting a wide range of issues, ranging from the administration's Cuba policy to defence spending.

"We want a divorce, Bill" and "gay rights now," the demonstrators chanted as they stood in the street holding placards, watched by dozens of police officers.

Mr. Clinton made no reference to the controversy during his speech.

The bill creating a national park at the Presidio has been passed by both the House of Representatives and the Senate but is held up in conference committee.

Bangladesh court bars Ershad jail speech

DHAKA (R) — Bangladesh's Supreme Court rejected Monday a plea by jailed former President Hossain Mohammad Ershad to make an election campaign speech from prison, leaders of his party said.

"The Supreme Court has upheld a stay order the government obtained yesterday on the ex-president's bid to make the speech on radio and television, and extended it (the stay order) until Tuesday noon," one Jatiya Party leader said.

"This means his effort to make the speech has been scuttled, at least until Wednesday's elections."

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Uneasy ride to summit

THE COMMUNIQUE issued at the end of the Damascus summit between Syrian President Hafez Al Assad, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah Ben Abdul Aziz may have gone beyond the mere calling for an Arab summit in Cairo on June 21-23 by also purporting to "dictate" the summit's agenda. Sandwiched between the call for Arab solidarity and cooperation in the face of the new "realities" in the region created by the election of Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu, the three Arab leaders made a strong bid to set the tone for the projected meeting especially in the area of how to deal with the new Israeli government.

In order to make sure that the Damascus mini-summit, and later the Cairo summit, will not be interpreted as war conferences, the three leaders reaffirmed the Arabs' unwavering support for a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East as a strategic option. The punch line in the Damascus communiqué, though, was the absolute rejection of the three nos attributed to Netanyahu's broad outline of his policy on peace with the Arab side, which included total opposition to the establishment of a Palestinian state and to withdrawal from East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights.

The Arab consensus that emerged from Damascus made the resolution of the Palestinian question a central issue in the search for a permanent and just peace in the area, something that obviously contradicted Netanyahu's sense of priorities. Complete withdrawal from East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, on the other hand, were made absolute demands on which the Arab side will not compromise. If Netanyahu persists in rejecting these conditions, as it now appears to be the case, then there can be no escape from an eventual Arab-Israeli clash in the days ahead. That is why we believe the timing of the Cairo summit is most opportune since it will serve the purpose of putting the new Israeli government on notice on where the Arab World stands on issues of war and peace in the region.

As His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, said in remarks published yesterday, Jordan would like to see the agenda of the Arab meeting expanded to cover other related issues so that stability and peace in the region would become more viable and durable.

In this vein, Jordan obviously like to see the issues of peace discussed on a broader plateau so that the respective roles of Turkey and Iran are also taken into consideration. There is also the water issue that warrants an Arab consensus since this subject may undermine the entire peace regime in the region unless properly addressed. Then there is the vexing problem that Arab countries which have signed peace treaties with the Jewish state would face if Israel and the Arab World end up on a collision course over the Likud-led coalition's ideals and policies.

There are obviously no easy answers but the fact that the Arab leaders have finally sensed the urgency of the new situation in the Middle East by convening an expanded Arab summit is clearly the right road to take at this critical juncture.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for Al Ra'i daily Monday criticised the declaration issued after the Damascus summit because, he said, it contained words that do not change anything in the Arab countries' stand and only express hope that the future will bring better days for the Arabs. Fahed Al Faneh said that the declaration emphasised the three countries' desire, including that of Syria of course, to pursue efforts for peace with Israel, something which means that Damascus has been keen on concluding a treaty with the Jewish state, like Jordan and Egypt, but has been at loggerheads with Jordan because it did not wait for Syria to conclude its peace first, following Lebanon's example. The writer also criticised the Damascus declaration calling for an Arab summit meeting because it excluded Iraq, as if Iraq were no more part of the Arab World. He said that the meeting repeated empty phrases, like calling on the world community to pressure Israel into accepting the U.N. resolutions and withdraw from Arab lands, and urging the U.S. to interfere and help achieve that goal, although they realise that Washington is totally biased towards Israel. Furthermore, argued the writer, the Damascus meeting called on Israel to join the nuclear non-proliferation treaty while the three Arab states realise too well that Egypt and the other Arab countries have endorsed the same treaty after failing to enlist the world community's help to make the Jewish state sign. He said it goes without saying that the Damascus declaration did not and would not help bring about any change for the better in the Arab World.

The View from Fourth Circle

Arab summitry, electric toothbrushes and other modern phenomena

By Rami G. Khouri

The proposed Arab summit in Cairo later this month is both hopeful and sad. It is, at once, a sign of dogged determination to forge a coherent pan-Arab national political position, and also a sign of Arab political disarray, fantasy and weakness that have often reached monumental proportions. It is hopeful because inter-Arab meetings at head-of-state level can only be useful, even if they accentuate embarrassing personal and/or political rivalries; it is sad because Arab summitry has degenerated over the years from a noble desire to forge a common Arab position vis-à-vis external, usually Israeli, threats, to a simplistic, emotional tendency to view a mere gathering of Arab leaders as an achievement in itself. We should approach this summit with a combination of hope and caution, and of realism and honesty. My reading of the Arab situation in this pre-summit period suggests the following relevant points:

1. Is this to be a summit of Arab leaders, states or people? Unfortunately, about half of the heads-of-state who will attend the summit have serious problems at home, including outright armed rebellions by their own people; and some Arab leaders rule mainly by the force of arms and police state methods reminiscent of the worst Euro-Soviet traditions of totalitarianism and authoritarianism. A few Arab leaders would win a free election in their own country, but many would not. Therefore, one has to ask hard and painful questions about the representational credibility of many of the assembled Arab heads of state, and whether their political rivalries reflect real tensions among their peoples.

The concept of summitry needs to be reconsidered in a manner that taps the opinions of Arab people as well as those of Arab leaders and their professional advisers. The danger of Arab summits that raise expectations but fail to achieve practical goals is that they may prove to be counter-productive, if their primary result is a further erosion of the people's trust in their leaders' capacity to work for common Arab aspirations and rights.

2. The fact that Iraq is not invited to the summit and Sudan's status is doubtful strikes me as a major impediment to meaningful summitry. The whole point of such summits is to admit and to work through differences and reach common positions, which means tackling the contentious issues that plague relations between Arab states. Iraq and Sudan represent two such contentious issues. To leave them out of an Arab summit meeting that has issued invitations to Djibouti and the Comoro Islands, while expecting the summit to address important aspects of Arab security, strikes me as political wishful thinking that borders on the hallucinatory. It further degrades the already thin credibility of Arab summitry and works directly into the hands of those domestic critics who already accuse many Arab regimes of pandering to, and seeking the protection of, the United States and Israel. An antiseptic,

selective Arab summit only of approved Arabs runs the huge risk of being seen by ordinary Arab people not as a meaningful statement of Arab identity and will, but rather as a degrading, meaningless sequel to the American-Israeli-driven dynamic that brought us spectacles such as the Sharm el-Sheikh summit.

3. Consequently, it seems to me, this particular summit faces the monumental danger of going down in history as the summit that officially validated the transition from Arabism as a national political identity to Arabism as merely a commercial-cultural construct that is more symbolic of emotional identity than reflective of a substantive political will to act in defence of Arab rights. I have looked hard, but without success, for more generous interpretations of the fact that the largest collections of senior Arab leaders and officials in recent years have come in response to terror attacks against Israel, the "new Middle East" and its elusive promise of commercial gains, foreign investments and American-European-Japanese financial aid, or the election of a Likudnik Israeli prime minister. If Arab summits cannot be convened on the basis of Arab initiatives to address Arab national challenges based on a native Arab identification of our needs, constraints and aspirations, then one should consider the case for closing the book on the last three decades of Arab summitry and looking for new means of promoting joint action among Arab states; the most logical alternatives strike me as coordination at the sub-regional level, and inter-Arab cooperation by non-governmental and private groups who do not suffer all the sensitivities and constraints of state actors.

There is nothing sacred or permanent about Arab summits. Like electric toothbrushes, self-ironing trousers and other manifestations of modernisation, the phenomenon of Arab summitry has to be evaluated on its own merits; it should be maintained or abandoned on the basis of whether or not it is effective and relevant to its constituency of consumers, without undue attention to emotionalism, a nostalgic perpetuation of the way things were, or the politics of instinctive, Pavlovian knee-jerkism that gives the illusion of goal-directed action when, in fact, we may mainly engage in a reflexive reaction to external stimuli.

4. The track record of Arab summitry and joint action is impressive as a sign of our instinctive desire to work together for common purposes, but it is singularly unimpressive in its achievements, as far as I can remember, other than perhaps dissuading Canada from moving its embassy to Jerusalem about a decade ago. It would be useful for this or any future Arab summit to engage in two processes that might help us navigate our way out of the apparent dead end that we have reached in this respect.

One suggestion I would make is to broaden the decision-making process beyond heads of state only. Some mecha-

nism must be found to allow the sentiments of the Arab people as a whole to be reflected in the summitry of their leaders. Is it possible, given the widespread availability of television, radio, telephones and other means of mass communication, to hold a quick electronic referendum on Arab people and ask them to respond to several options on how they would respond to a Likud-led Israeli government? Could we not ask people to indicate if they would like relations/negotiations with Israel speeded up; slowed down, frozen, or maintained in their current state? We could ask this question this week, and again after the new government in Israel is formed and declares its programme. Could we not also ask a question about Arab people's attitudes towards Iraq and Sudan and their inclusion in the summit? The technology is there to consult the Arab people on their views on the major issues that challenge them and that may determine the fate of their children's lives. Tapping the Arab people's views would add a powerful new dimension to Arab summitry.

The second suggestion I would make is that we might profitably copy the recent trend of events at international summits and U.N. global conferences, whereby parallel summits are held by non-governmental organisations and private groups. I am convinced that most ordinary Arabs, free of rivalries and artificial fears, could contribute meaningfully to generating realistic compromises on regional issues such as Iraq, Iran and the Gulf, Iraq-Syria ties, Egypt-Sudan ties, Syria-Lebanon ties, Jordan's ties with Syria, Iraq, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, Yemen-Saudi ties, Libya's ties with almost everyone east of the Mississippi, and the overall contexts of Arab-Israeli, Arab-Turkish, and Arab-Iranian relations. If Arab summitry merely perpetuates political tensions among Arab leaders, and does not tap the underlying will to accommodation and pragmatism among the Arab people, then we should not expect anything other than the prevalent combination of hope and sadness, of promise and cynicism, that defines the atmosphere surrounding Arab summit meetings. It is high time that non-governmental Arab organisations started meeting — preferably in an Arab country, rather than Cyprus, Greece or England — and contributing to the regional consultations that are dominated by governments and leaders. One important contribution that non-governmental organisations could make would be independently to assess the track record and the driving forces of Arab summitry itself. In this way, Arab summits might achieve their full promise, by effectively, pro-actively working for the common rights and hopes of the Arab people, rather than mainly going through the motions of responding to Israeli stimuli and being confounded by new and ever more paralyzing intra-Arab tensions.

Big cities could be the solution rather than the problem

By Gwynne Dyer

CITIES ARE monsters. Cities are bad for your health. Cities are impersonal and alienating. And the bigger they get, the worse they are. That is the general tone of the rhetoric at the "Habitat II" Conference on Human Settlements, which has gathered ten thousand diplomats, experts and international civil servants in Istanbul for two weeks to discuss big cities. But it is nonsense.

When I first lived in Istanbul, a quarter of a century ago, the city had only three million people — and that was three times its normal size. After the fall of Rome it was the biggest or second-biggest city in the world for a thousand years, but it had never exceeded a million people before.

In the early 1970s, however, the older inhabitants became alarmed. Hundreds of thousands of rural immigrants were arriving each year, and the city's identity and traditions seemed to be vanishing under an avalanche of newcomers — it was being "villagised".

Well, Istanbul's population is now ten million, and it has not become a village. Its character is intact and few of its residents envy the lives of their grandparents. Bigger is not always worse, no matter what the experts at the "Habitat II" conference say.

The conference, sponsored by the United Nations, is based on a report produced by the U.N. Development and Environment Programmes, the World Bank and the World Resources Institute. At the beginning of this century, the report's authors point out, only 5 per cent of the world's people lived in cities of over 100,000.

In a single century we have completely reversed that situation. Forty-five per cent of the world's people now live in big cities.

In Istanbul's heyday, it was one of only two cities on the planet that had reached a million people. By 2015, the world will contain around 560 cities with more than a million people, and dozens with over ten million.

Indeed, by 2015 there will be seven "mega-cities" of over 20 million people, warns the U.N. report, and everyone of them except Tokyo will be in what is now the Third World: Bombay, Lagos, Shanghai, Jakarta, Sao Paulo and Karachi. Vast supporting cankers spreading across the once-green land, blighting lives, and shackling people to an unnatural, unsustainable servitude far from the nourishing bosom of nature.

Sorry. Disregard that last sentence. I went to get a coffee, and the column-writing programme started spewing out the anti-big-city rhetoric and second-hand nostalgia for a mythic rural Eden that is usual when people discuss this subject. The truth is most people in big cities, though they whine endlessly about their lot, would hate the alternative (which is not to live in a big city).

The U.N. report is studded with panicky factoids that, on closer inspection, turn out to be no cause for panic. For example, we are told that soon, 80 per cent of the world's big-city dwellers will live in Third World countries. But if the rest of the world is going to follow a path of economic development anything like that once travelled by the West, what else would you expect? The Third World is where 80 per cent of the world's people live.

Cities are not bad for us. If the six billion people on Earth were spread evenly across the rural areas instead of heaped up in cities, we would have no countryside worth speaking of. Moreover, we would have little by the way of art, science, literature or technology, for those are all mainly urban activities.

Cities are where almost all innovation happens because they, and only they, contain a critical mass of people with different experiences and differing perspectives. Their populations are generally better educated and healthier than those of the rural areas around them because it is easier to provide services to concen-

trated groups of people. So why are cities seen as the problem, not the solution?

One reason is that when cities grow fast, huge slums and even street-sleepers proliferate. It looks horrifying and it feels hopeless. But this is generally a transitional phenomenon: visit the areas that were squatter settlements 30 years ago in Istanbul, or Manila, or Rio, and you will find that most of the dwellings have been steadily upgraded until they provide decent shelter. In many older areas, the residents now have water, electricity and even sewers — while raw new shantytowns go on springing up around them. This is how cities have always grown.

The other reason is a panic about sheer numbers. "Mega-cities" of 20-million-plus proliferating across what used to be the Third World sound rather frightening: Charles Dickens meets Blade Runner. And this image persists even though the world's biggest city — Tokyo at 24 million — is also its most orderly.

Somewhat, nobody believes that Jakarta or Shanghai or Sao Paulo can achieve the same result when they reach a similar size, but why not? They are pretty orderly now. And hardly anybody

understands that this is not runaway, limitless growth. There is a ceiling.

In small countries, up to a third of the population may wind up in the national metropolis: Stockholm, Athens, Auckland. In compact middle-sized countries like Japan, France, South Africa or Britain, the biggest city may amount to 15 or 20 per cent of the population, but rarely more. And in very large countries like the United States, Russia, India and China, the biggest city never exceeds 5-10 per cent of the population.

In rapidly developing parts of the world many new mega-cities are now growing rapidly towards that limit, just as London, New York and Tokyo did during their own growth spurts. But then they will stop — and shortly afterwards, around 2040, global population growth will probably coast to a halt around the 10 billion mark.

So many people and so much consumption may put intolerable stresses on the natural environment, but do not blame the cities. And do not worry too much about them either. They are, on the whole, the best-run parts of the planet.

LETTERS

Criticism should be constructive

To the Editor:

CONTRARY TO what the headline of the article "Failure awaits Cairo economic summit" (Jordan Times, June 9, 1996) suggests, the summit, like the Amman economic summit and the Casablanca one before it, is part of a larger effort (the peace process) intended to provide our children with a better life than the one we ourselves had and one that is free from fear and, instead, full of hope.

It stands to reason to expect that such an effort would need courage, hard work and, above all, time. Premature statements, speculation and hasty judgements miss the whole point of such a monumental and historic task.

The new institutional structures called for in the Amman declaration are intended to promote regional cooperation in areas such as finance, tourism and trade exchanges. These new structures will augment the bilateral peace tracks by providing the right environment for economic and social exchanges in the region. All four institutions, including the REDWG permanent secretariat in Amman, are either already established or their articles of agreement are about to be ratified. They are not dead. To claim that they are is gross misinformation.

Furthermore, to claim that the MENA summit hosted in Amman last October turned out to be a "disappointment" seems to be a sweeping statement, given the empirical evidence to date. Through the Amman summit, both the private and the public sectors in Jordan, including the institutions of the armed and security forces, have presented Jordan at its best. This is the feedback that we got from all quarters, including a very distinguished Japanese delegation visiting our country at this very moment.

Furthermore, important regional projects in the areas of telecommunications, energy and other sectors, are being implemented or are about to be implemented as an off-shoot from the MENA summit in Amman. The status quo of these activities will be presented at the Cairo summit by the Jordanian delegation. A committee, which includes representatives of the private and

public sectors in Jordan, is working on all aspects of the Jordanian role at the Cairo summit and to say that "the government has no idea of what to do at the Cairo summit" is unfair and uninformed. Most importantly, very important pieces of legislation in the areas of income tax reform and encouragement of investment were also passed in the context of the MENA summit in Amman. These new laws are a qualitative jump in terms of providing an investor-friendly environment in Jordan. If these achievements are "disappointing" to the author of the above-mentioned article, they did not prove to be disappointing to the rest of the world, judging from the results to date.

I might add that it has been less than ten months since the Amman summit and it should not be a surprise to any of us if more time is needed for concrete benefits to be felt by all sectors and all regions in Jordan.

It seems to me that the least we can do in such testing times is to be factual in our display of preferences or views. We can also display some sensitivity to the impact of uninformed statements regarding the monumental efforts that are being made by the people of this country of ours. Shortcomings can be discussed and corrected and I can think of many. However, undermining achievements did not serve any purpose in the past and will not serve any purpose today or in the future.

Finally, and contrary to the claims of the author of the above mentioned article, we do have a new Middle East. Fortunately, it is here to stay and there is no going back on replacing human suffering and despair with hope and the realisation of a dream for a safe and prosperous tomorrow.

Umayya Toukan,
Director General,
Amman Financial Market.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Ukraine forges secret ties with Libya — report

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Ukraine has established secret contacts with Libya that have raised fears among U.S. officials of nuclear cooperation between Kiev and Tripoli, the Washington Times reported Monday. But a State Department official played down the newspaper account, which quoted a U.S. intelligence report, and noted that most of Ukraine's nuclear technology had been transferred to Russia. According to the intelligence report obtained by the newspaper, Ukraine and Libya have established a committee of 13 senior Ukrainian government officials who are tasked with overseeing deals with Libya. Under the committee auspices, the Libyans have contacted an Ukrainian electronics company in the northwestern Ukrainian city of Kharkiv and several heads of scientific research centres there. "The highest levels of the Ukrainian leadership" have condoned the relationship with Libya, the intelligence report said. But a U.S. official, who spoke on condition he not be named, suggested that the report was alarmist although he was unable to deny it. "I haven't seen anything that would indicate that there is anything sinister going on," he said.

Greek-Cypriot soldier killed in hat 'exchange'

NICOSIA (AFP) — A Greek-Cypriot soldier killed in the buffer zone of divided Nicosia was killed by a Turkish-Cypriot soldier with whom he was trying to exchange hats, according to a U.N. report. The report drawn up for the U.N. Security Council found no evidence that 19-year-old Stelios Panayi was shot by a third soldier in the May 3 incident, U.N. sources told AFP. It also dismissed Turkish-Cypriot reports that the killing took place on their side of the "green line" which divides the capital as well as the rest of the island. "Both the National Guardsman (Panayi) and the Turkish-Cypriot soldier were in the buffer zone," said Waldemar Rokoszewski, spokesman of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP). He said British U.N. peacekeepers made three attempts to reach Panayi and were stopped each time by warning shots from the Turkish side. The Greek-Cypriot was finally evacuated after lengthy negotiations with the Turkish-Cypriots.

Egyptian, Libyan militants end backing to GIA

CAIRO (AFP) — Two militant groups from Egypt and Libya have declared an end to their support of Algeria's Armed Islamic Group (GIA) for "spilling the blood of innocents," the daily Al Hayat reported on Monday. Egypt's Jihad and Libya's Islamic Warriors Group (IWG) both condemned the group led by Abu Abdul Rahman Amin, also known as Jamal Zeitouni, in statements issued "in London and outside Britain," the Arabic daily said. "Egypt's Jihad group announces the end of its support to Abu Abdul Rahman Amin's clique which has taken control of the GIA," the group said, quoted by Al Hayat. Jihad cited "GIA's involvement in serious violations of Islamic law," and called on others to stop supporting the fiercest militant group battling the Algerian authorities. The Libyan IWG, in a statement signed by its leader Abu Abdullah Al Sadiq, said the GIA had "shed the blood of people whose death is not authorised by any Islamic law." The GIA "has killed many of Algeria's Muslims to the point that the struggle seems to have become a struggle between the GIA and the Muslims."

Exiles link Tehran to murder in France

PARIS (AFP) — A suspect in the murder of former Iranian Minister Redza Mazlouman, who was found dead in his suburban apartment near here, is a highly-placed member of the Iranian secret service, an Iranian exile organisation said on Monday. The suspect, Ahmad Djahjouni, was arrested in Bonn two days after the May 28 shooting murder of Mazlouman in his apartment at Creteil, east of here. The National Council for Iranian Resistance, headed by Massoud Rajavi and based at Auvers-sur-Oise, north of here, said Djahjouni had had contacts for several years with a secret service unit based in the "third floor" of Iran's embassy in Bonn. It said the unit had organised most of the murders of Iranian dissidents in Europe, which it said were proof of the failure of the European Union's policy of "critical dialogue" with Iran. Mazlouman, 60, who served under the Shah, had political refugee status in France and reportedly was active in monarchist opposition movements against the Iranian regime.

50 held in raid on Tehran garden party

TEHRAN (AFP) — Police raided a garden party in southern Iran and arrested around 50 young guests and members of a music band, as part of a campaign against "social corruption," a newspaper reported Monday. The guests, 13 of them girls, were all between the ages of 18 to 22, Kayhan daily said without giving a date for the raid. They were partying in a garden in the city of Shiraz in Fars province. Musical instruments were seized. Police often raid parties in big cities in their campaign to combat signs of "decadent" Western culture. Mixed parties of unmarried people are not allowed in the Islamic republic.

Arafat, Weizman to attend U.N. meeting

ANKARA (AFP) — Israeli President Ezer Weizman and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat will attend the U.N. cities meeting in Istanbul this week, the Turkish Foreign Ministry said Monday. "Presidents Arafat and Weizman... are due to take part in the high-level segment of the U.N. conference on human settlements starting Wednesday," ministry spokesman Omer Akbel told a news briefing. It was not clear if Mr. Weizman and Mr. Arafat would have talks in Istanbul, but Turkish President Suleyman Demirel was expected to hold meetings with both leaders, diplomatic sources said.

Report: Leader of militants drowns

CAIRO (AP) — An Egyptian militant considered a leader of Arabs who fought in Afghanistan in the 1980s died in a drowning accident last week, a newspaper reported Monday. The circumstances of Ali Al Rashidy's drowning were unclear, but the London-based Al Hayat newspaper said his death could weaken radicals in Egypt, some of whom depend on his support. Islamic Media Watch, a London-based group of Muslim activists, said Rashidy drowned last week, but it did not specify the country. Al Hayat said it was kept secret so as not to endanger other militants living there. The so-called Arab Afghans were once considered heroes in the Muslim World for their role in fighting Soviet troops. But Arab governments have blamed them for instigating unrest after they returned home, particularly in Egypt and Algeria. Rashidy, whose alias was Abu Obaida Al Basmehy, went to Afghanistan in 1986. Al Hayat said he moved to Pakistan in 1993 but left after the government started expelling Afghan Arabs. It was not known where he settled, but his name remained on Egypt's wanted list for his reported support of radical groups.

Killing of settlers turns up heat on Israel's Likud and Netanyahu

TEL AVIV (R) — The killing of two Jewish settlers is likely to put further heat on incoming Israeli Prime Minister-elect Benjamin Netanyahu, who is walking a political tightrope between hardline ideology and Arab demands to foster peace.

The man and woman were gunned down in a drive-by shooting near the West Bank late on Sunday, apparently by Palestinian militants.

Their infant son was found uninjured in their bullet-riddled car not far from Jerusalem.

The killings, if proven to be the work of guerrillas, would be the first since Mr. Netanyahu defeated incumbent Shimon Peres in a down-to-the-wire election on May 29.

Mr. Netanyahu, 46, hopes to form a government by June 17. He was elected by a thin margin on a campaign that played heavily on Israeli fears of guerrilla violence.

The incident could add an additional impediment to the expected first test of Mr. Netanyahu's government. Israel's promised but long-delayed troop pullout from Hebron, a hotbed of Arab and Jewish militancy.

Family members said the dead couple was from Kiryat Arba, where 5,000 Jewish settlers live cheek-by-jowl with the 120,000 Palestinians of neighbouring Hebron.

Police at the scene of the

attack near the Israeli farming village of Zekharia said the gunmen may have fled into Hebron, about 25 kilometres away.

Guerrilla attacks were a telling factor in the campaign, and have had direct and destructive bearing on Israeli implementation of crucial peace moves with the Palestinians.

Anxious Arab leaders, closing ranks as the new government begins to take form, have warned that any Israeli retreat from the peace process could hurl the Middle East back to bloodshed.

As media master Netanyahu has maintained an unaccustomed silence, Arabs are closely watching his Likud Party colleagues for hints as to his policy intentions. The signs, from the Arab standpoint, have been less than auspicious.

"Arab states understand that there is now a government that will stand fast, with great firmness, on the issues it considers important," Jerusalem's Israel mayor, Ehud Olmert, said hours before the shooting.

Arab frustrations over the sluggish peace process have been exacerbated by Mr. Netanyahu's rejection of Mr. Peres' bedrock formula of trading occupied Arab land for peace.

Yossi Beilin, a minister in the outgoing Peres government, said if Mr. Netanyahu "sticks to the policy he presented in his election campaign, he will be unable to lead the



An Israeli policeman inspects the car in which a man and a woman were killed in a drive-by shooting late Sunday night in an Israeli village a few kilometres from the West Bank (Reuters photo)

peace." David Levy, who strongly hinted after meeting Mr. Netanyahu on Sunday he will serve as foreign minister in the new government, took pains to sound a conciliatory note.

"I hope we will be able to both reassure and make manifest our desire to further the peace," he told reporters.

But the moderate Levy was little able to prevent hawkish Likud policies from foiling peace progress and eroding Israel's relationship with main ally Washington during his first stint as foreign minister under then-Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir.

Mr. Levy's work will be cut out for him as Arab states have lost no time in

snatching the initiative, planning to meet in Cairo on June 21-23 in the first pan-Arab summit since 1990.

A wave of suicide bombings that killed 59 people in Israel in February and March erased Mr. Peres' commanding lead over Mr. Netanyahu.

The bombings prompted a freeze in implementing the

pullout from Hebron, the last of seven West Bank towns scheduled to be handed over to Palestinian self-rule.

It also led Mr. Peres to impose a crushing closure over the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza, devastating the Palestinian economy and raising the ire of residents heavily dependent on jobs in Israel.

Sinn Fein shut out as peace talks begin

BELFAST (AFP) — Historic Northern Ireland peace talks got off to a bumpy start here Monday, with the Sinn Fein political wing of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) locked out and discord mounting over the American chair-

cheated," said a grim-faced Adams.

"We came here as peace-makers...on the basis of our elected mandate to advance the peace process...to extend the hand of friendship. We did not come here to have a statement read to us."

"Our aim was all-party negotiations," British Prime Minister John Major told the opening session. "We have not entirely achieved that. One party which achieved success in the elections is absent through its own choice."

His Irish counterpart, John Bruton, said, "It runs completely counter to the logic of the peace strategy Sinn Fein have proclaimed...that the IRA have not yet put in place the democratic basis for Sinn Fein participation."

Sinn Fein contends it earned its place at the table on the basis of its record high 15.5 per cent mandate in the May 30 elections for delegations to the negotiations.

The unionist parties, at least one of which had threatened to boycott the talks over Mr. Mitchell's chairmanship, meanwhile continued to demand his replacement, and the former senator was not present at the opening session.

Most of the unionists judge Mr. Mitchell to be too close to the Irish-Republican community in America to be impartial, particularly on the crucial question of paramilitary disarmament which he was also to oversee.

"Naming him as chairman is the equivalent of an American Serb presiding over talks on the future of Croatia," said John Taylor, deputy leader of the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP).

Instead, the unionists put forth an alternate agenda calling for two co-chairpersons to be selected by the largest two parties at the table, who would chair the talks alternately.

Hebron closed down after killing

(Continued from page 1)

car, said police spokesman Eric Bar-Chen.

Israel TV said the weapons fired by the gunmen, a Kalashnikov and an M-16 assault rifle, were also used in a January drive-by shooting that killed two Israeli soldiers near Hebron.

The January shooting was claimed by a previously unknown group, the Warriors of Islam, which said at the

time it was avenging the assassination of the chief bombmaker of Hamas.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for Sunday's night's shooting.

Moshe Shahal, the outgoing minister of internal security, said the incident marked the first time assailants carried out a drive-by shooting in Israel proper.

Palestinian police detain rights activist again

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Palestinian police arrested leading human rights campaigner Iyad Sarraj on Monday for the second time in three weeks, officials said.

Dr. Sarraj, a psychiatrist and British passport holder who heads the Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizens' Rights, was taken from his Gaza City home shortly after midnight by uniformed policemen, officials said.

Palestinian Attorney General Khaled Al Kidra said Dr. Sarraj had been re-

manded in custody for an initial 48-hour period pending investigations into unspecified accusations against him.

"We can't give a reason for his detention before the inquiry is finished," Mr. Kidra said.

But he insisted that the arrest "is not related to Sarraj's human rights activities, the work of his association or his freedom of expression."

Officials at the citizens' rights commission said they had no details concerning the reasons for Dr. Sarraj's

arrest.

Dr. Sarraj was last arrested on May 18 and held for nine days on charges of libel after sharply criticising Yasser Arafat's self-rule authority in an interview published in the New York Times.

In the interview he had the autonomous Palestinian National Authority was "corrupt, dictatorial and oppressive."

He later apologised for some of the remarks in an open letter to Mr. Arafat, but on his release insisted he would continue to speak out

in defence of human rights in the Palestinian territories.

"I signed a promise saying that I agreed to obey media laws, but I added a paragraph saying that as a Palestinian citizen I reserved the right to express my views in total liberty," he told AFP after his release.

At that time, said an Mr. Kidra, Sarraj's statements were continuing. "He is accused of libel against the (Palestinian National Authority) and we will make our determination later," the official said.

Egypt reports positive response to invitations

(Continued from page 1)

Egypt said on Sunday that Arabs would reject any unilateral Israeli attempt to change the basis of the peace talks.

Osama Al Baz, Mr. Mubarak's senior political adviser, said the framework set in Madrid was the only one acceptable. "The prime minister of Israel or anyone else in Israel or any other country cannot change this point of reference," he added.

Syria said on Monday that Mr. Netanyahu was adopting a programme of "war and expansion" and his electoral victory undermined any excuse for relations with Israel.

"Netanyahu's draft programme, which was deliberately leaked to the Israeli press, shows that he will not abandon the policy of aggression and expansion to adopt a policy of war," said the official newspaper Al Baath.

But Mr. Mubarak, asked if Mr. Netanyahu's statements meant reversing the progress towards peace in the Middle East, said: "Israel will not control Middle East policy... Peace will continue despite any obstacles and the Cairo summit is so that peace will continue, and I mean comprehensive and just peace."

The international Arabic-language newspaper Al Sharq Al Awsat said King Hassan of Morocco may stay away because the organisers failed to consult him on the time and place.

The king, an important figure in the early stages of the Middle East peace process, would, however, send a representative and Morocco would adhere to any summit decisions, it added.

"There are various interpretations, perhaps the most important of which is the way in which some sources interpreted the fact that the time and venue... were announced without consulting important forces in the Arab World," it said.

A Qatari foreign ministry official said on Sunday that Foreign Minister Sheikh Hamad Ben Jassim Ben Jabr Al Thani was expected to represent the Gulf state instead of the emir, who has pressing engagements at home.

A Qatari official said Qatar will not open its commercial representation office in Israel until Mr. Netanyahu "pledges to continue the peace process" along the principles drawn up by his predecessor.

"Qatar cannot envisage opening a commercial repre-

sentation office in Israel before the new Israeli government pledges to continue the peace process along the lines of the principles and accords agreed with the Arabs," the official told AFP.

Qatar threatened earlier Sunday to freeze fledgling ties with Israel if the Jewish state dragged its feet over the peace process.

Qatar and Oman are the only two Gulf Arab states to have begun moves to normalise relations with Israel, with Israeli officials currently in Doha to open a commercial representation office.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa warned that the summit could seek to put the brakes on any normalisation of ties with Israel if the Jewish state tries to reverse the peace process.

The summit "will be positive," Mr. Musa told journalists.

"We do not support any negative steps unless we are faced by negative positions from the other side. Then it is another matter," Mr. Musa said when asked if the summit would ask Arab states to freeze any normalisation.

"Currently we all hope the peace process will proceed on the same basis. I don't think the Arabs can accept retreating from that or being asked

to take steps forward while the other side is going backwards," he said.

The minister also hinted that Egyptian and Sudanese presidents Mubarak and Omar Al Bashir could meet for the first time since 1993 on the sidelines of the summit.

"An invitation to the summit will be sent to Sudan. The sidelines of the summit are open to any bilateral meetings," Mr. Musa told journalists when asked about Khartoum's attendance at the gathering.

Mr. Musa underlined that the summit is an "action and a reaction," aiming to restore Arab solidarity and respond to potential headline positions by Mr. Netanyahu in the peace process.

"We are working in the interests of peace to support the foundations on which the peace process has stood and will continue to stand: land-for-peace and security for all," Mr. Musa said. "We are all worried by certain statements (by Netanyahu) concerning peace and its basis and its future. We are worried about peace, not afraid of Israel," he said. "There is another facet to the summit which Israel has nothing to do with, and that is the forming of Arab solidarity by the Arabs themselves."

Netanyahu puts final touches

(Continued from page 1)

National Religious Party leader Ze'evulun Hammer was notably expected to get a combined education and culture portfolio and the third post of deputy premier while ultra-orthodox politicians were tipped for the religious affairs, interior, labour and social affairs ministries.

The absence of key hardliners at the top of the cabinet hierarchy appeared to be counterbalanced meanwhile by the Likud government's policy programme, new details of which emerged on Monday.

A draft version of policy

guidelines included a stipulation that the government will insist on its right to send the Israeli army into autonomous Palestinian areas if necessary to capture suspected "terrorists," raising the prospects of conflict with more than 20,000 armed Palestinian policemen.

"The government reserves the right to use its security forces against terrorism wherever it is found," reads the draft policy programme.

The programme says the government will pursue negotiations with the Palestinians and "respect its commitments" under past peace agreements, but it does not

explicitly mention the Oslo peace accords which granted autonomy to Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

There is also no direct mention of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, which the outgoing Labour government recognised as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

The programme rules out the creation of a Palestinian state on the West Bank or any division of Jerusalem.

It also stipulates that any peace agreement with Syria must be based on "Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights," which Israel seized from Syria in the 1967 war and "annexed" in 1981.

Five Israeli soldiers killed

(Continued from page 1)

setting up of a ceasefire monitoring committee made up of representatives from France, the United States, Syria, Israel and Lebanon.

But several rounds of talks in Washington involving the five countries have failed to set up the monitoring committee.

In 1995, guerrilla attacks inside the "security zone" killed a total of 60, including 25 Israeli soldiers, according to an AFP count.

BIS: Central banks must turn from fighting inflation to deflation

BASEL, Switzerland (AFP) — Central banks, having concentrated their efforts on controlling inflation, must now tackle the problems of deflation, the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) said Monday.

The BIS, known as the central bankers' central bank, said in its annual report that inflation had been the number-one concern for the industrial economies for three decades.

But inflation in the Group of 10 nations was now running at an average of only 2.25 per cent which was the lowest rate for more than 30 years, it said.

"The forces bearing on the price level are now more balanced than they have been in some decades," it said.

It was now time to remember the advice of economists John Maynard Keynes and Knut Wicksell who had argued in the 1920s that it was "appropriate as well as feasible for central banks to resist both inflation and deflation," it said.

Set up in 1930 to deal with German reparations after World War I, the BIS promotes cooperation between central banks and acts as agent or trustee in international financial settlements.

One of its council members, economist Bill White, said it now was possible to anticipate a period of "negative inflation" — something that has already been seen in Japan.

The BIS report argued: "The two most important macro-economic problems

in the industrial world (steep budget deficits and joblessness) — which must be tackled promptly — have disinflationary implications."

It looked favourably upon the idea of central banks using their monetary influence in case the risks of deflation became too great.

"Central banks have the capacity to use monetary policy to adjust demand, should it fail to grow at a pace consistent with price stability, and they should be prepared to do so," it said.

Tackling another central-bank concern, the BIS said the handling and prevention of financial crises like the Mexico debt affair and the collapse of Baring's bank must remain a top priority.

"The fact that the system continued to function well

in the face of a number of shocks ... should provide no grounds for complacency," it said.

It added that deregulating the financial industry "should be both gradual and carefully phased."

"The experience of many industrial countries in recent years highlights the dangers inherent in the process," it said.

"As far for managing financial crises when they do occur, lessons drawn from the experience of both developed and developing countries are germane," it said.

"Financial difficulties should be dealt with quickly and decisively, recognising that the fiscal costs will be substantial but less than those resulting from delay," it added.

"In addition, it will be essential for policy-makers to (find) means to retain the confidence of the financial markets if a significant run on the currency is to be avoided," it said.

The BIS report noted that Asian countries accounted for nearly 80 per cent of all international loans made by Western banks outside their regions last year.

That is a record \$84.3 billion, out of a global \$108 billion, from \$15.5 billion in 1994 and \$47.8 billion in 1995.

The impact of the Mexican debt crisis on Asia, the world's fastest-growing economic region, was marginal, the report said.

But banks were now more prudent when lending to small industrialised countries, eastern Europe and

Latin America, it said.

Interbank credits in Asia last year were largely short-term and 64 per cent of loans were made for less than one year, the report said.

Thailand and South Korea were by far the biggest borrowers in the developing world, taking \$36.3 billion and \$22.3 billion in new credits, it said.

By the end of the year, it said, Thailand had become the biggest bank borrower in the developing world accounting for 89.5 billion, followed by South Korea (\$83.3 billion), Mexico (\$70.9 billion) and Brazil (\$68.5 billion), it said.

Oil price rise boosts Arab Gulf income in 1995 — study

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab Gulf oil producers earned more than \$4 billion in extra income in 1995 due to an improvement in crude prices, a regional study has showed.

The revenues of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) stood at around \$82.16 billion in 1995 compared with \$77.9 billion in 1994, said the study.

The increase in the income, which also included sales of oil products and condensates, was due to a rise in the price of OPEC's basket of seven crudes to \$16.8 in 1995 from \$15.45 in 1994.

A breakdown showed all GCC members recorded a growth in earnings, with those of Saudi Arabia rising to \$47.88 billion from \$46.5 billion.

Kuwait's income grew to \$11.77 billion from \$11.3 billion and the United Arab Emirates (UAE)'s revenues to \$13.9 billion from \$12.6 billion. There were slight increases in the income of Oman, Qatar and Bahrain.

The study did not provide figures on oil output but production by the six members remained unchanged at around 13 million barrels per day (bpd). Their oil exports ranged between 11 million and 12 million bpd.

ILO : At least 73 million in global child labour

GENEVA (R) — At least 73 million 10-14 year-old boys and girls around the globe are engaged in child labour, 13 per cent of all children in the age group, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) said Monday.

And in a report for its current annual conference, the United Nations agency said so few overall statistics were available that the world's total number of child workers could well be in the "hundreds of millions."

The report, part of an ILO drive to get children out of the workplace, said two thirds of the 73 million were in Asia and 24 million were in Africa.

But it was not only a problem in developing countries. Even rich economies like the United States and Britain — as well as some southern European countries — contributed to the figure.

Even in the United States, the report said, "the growth of the service sector, the rapid increase in the supply of part-time jobs and the search for a more flexible workforce have contributed to the expansion of the child-labour market."

"Today's child worker will be tomorrow's uneducated and untrained adult, forever trapped in grinding

poverty," said ILO Director-General Michel Hansenne introducing the report.

"No effort should be spared to break that vicious circle," he stressed.

The report will be discussed at the conference on June 12 by labour ministers from the ILO's 173 member states in an agenda aimed at speeding up worldwide efforts to end the most abusive forms of child employment — slave labour and prostitution.

Compiled by an ILO team of experts, the 38-page document says nine out of 10 children employed around the world lived in rural areas and were in agriculture or related activities.

But it said child labour is increasing steadily in the towns and cities of developing countries — although showing signs of decline in the emerging South East Asian economies — because of rapid global migration out of the countryside in search of work.

Urban working children were found mainly in trade and service industries, often earning minimal wages scarcely enough to keep themselves, according to the report.

In manufacturing industries, it said, they were most likely to be employed

"when their labour is less expensive or less troublesome than that of adults, when their labour is scarce, and when they are considered irreplaceable because of their size or perceived dexterity."

The report said the available figures suggested that more boys in the 10-14 group — around 41 million — worked than girls. But surveys rarely took into account girls left to look after households while parents worked.

Many girls also worked longer hours than boys because they were expected to help with housework after returning home.

Countries with the highest percentages of 10-14 year-old children in their work force were Mali, with 54.5 per cent, Burkina Faso with 51 per cent, Niger and Uganda with 45 per cent and Kenya with 41.3 per cent, the report said.

Bangladesh had 30.1 per cent, Nigeria 25.8, Haiti 25, Turkey 24, Ivory Coast 20.5, Pakistan 17.7, Brazil 16.1, India 14.4, China 11.6 and Egypt 11.2 per cent.

Asia had the greatest number in the age-group, with 44.6 million or 13 per cent of the total. But Africa had the highest proportion with 26.3 per cent or 23.6 million children working.

Arab Gulf states seek to attract foreign funds

DUBAI (R) — Six Arab Gulf states, seeking to lessen their dependence on oil exports, will meet next month to discuss a draft law aimed at attracting foreign investment, a United Arab Emirates (UAE) newspaper has reported.

One of the articles of the proposed investment law published in UAE newspapers provides for exemption from the 51 per cent local partnership in foreign investment projects' ownership and management and individual investment of foreign capital.

Laws in most of the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states require local partners to hold at least a 51 per cent stake in a joint venture with foreigners.

Western diplomats in the region say GCC states have in the past been urged by economic groups and businessmen to liberalise

their economies to facilitate and encourage foreign investment.

The draft law proposes a number of incentives to foreign investors including "exemption from the income or any other taxes for five years" and total or partial exemption from custom duties on several imports like raw materials, spare parts, machinery and other items, the Gulf News reported.

It said GCC experts would meet in Riyadh next month to discuss the draft law.

Strategic decisions by the Riyadh-based council require endorsement by ministerial committees ahead of presentation to GCC heads of state who hold an annual summit in December.

The GCC was set up in 1981 by Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and Bahrain as an economic and political alliance.

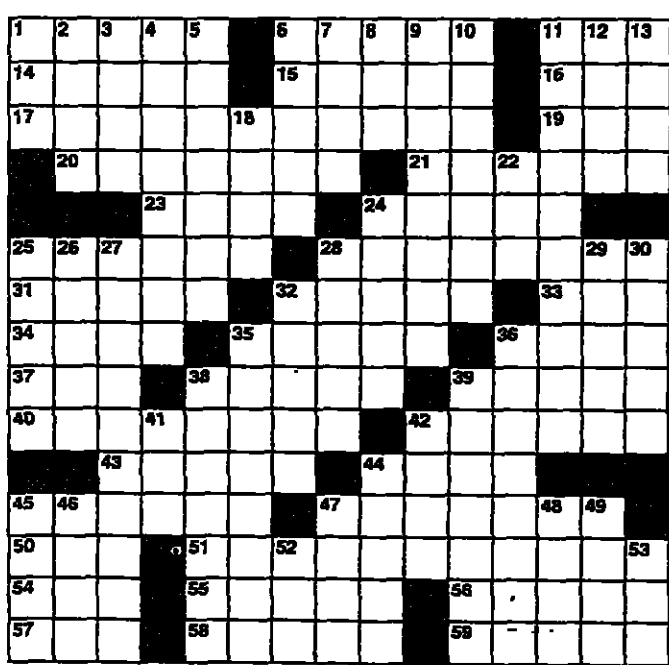
"Any foreign investment licensed under this law may not be confiscated unless the public interest entails such a measure in accordance with the laws in effect and after paying a fair compensation," the draft said.

The law is aimed at "luring advanced technology" and "priority shall be given to the projects which help reduce the GCC's dependence on foreign countries to satisfy the member countries' strategic and necessary needs... Increase non-oil exports, secure training and jobs for GCC nationals..." the draft added.

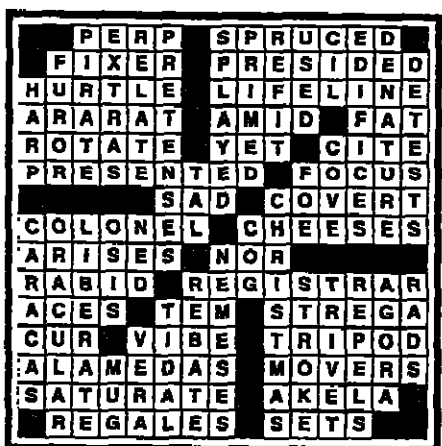
THE Daily Crossword by Richard Thomas

ACROSS

- 1 Charger
- 6 Dull surface
- 11 Tripod part
- 14 — du jour
- 15 NY city
- 16 Eggs
- 17 Casino customers
- 19 Zilch
- 20 Adherence
- 21 Argue about price
- 23 Beach resort near Italy
- 24 Philbin of TV
- 25 Old World badgers
- 28 Soft cheese
- 31 Last words
- 32 Goes over extensively in the mind
- 33 Encouraging word
- 34 Kind of bug
- 35 Grandma — artist
- 36 Cuban coin
- 37 One connected with: suff.
- 38 Balneations
- 39 Lineage
- 40 Afflicted with cephalgia
- 42 Bug
- 43 Eichhorn and Hartman
- 44 Wound
- 45 Scarecrow portrayer
- 47 Timber joint
- 50 Shade tree
- 51 Journey's end, almost
- 54 Position of a golf ball
- 55 Absurd
- 56 Range ridge
- 57 Great deal
- 58 — "Andronicus"
- 59 Notes



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- 5 Sidetracks
- 6 Very, to
- 7 Partner
- 8 Pigskin perch
- 9 North Carolinians
- 10 Annapolis grads
- 11 General at Gettysburg
- 12 Malefic
- 13 Big blow
- 18 American auto, briefly
- 22 Soldiers
- 24 Governors
- 25 Punjab prince
- 26 Tickle
- 27 Lancaster action film
- 28 Excessively sentimental
- 29 Canvas prop
- 30 — Island
- 32 Insects
- 35 Pasta
- 36 First performance
- 38 Single or double
- 39 Architect
- 40 Goodhue
- 41 Tunnel
- 42 Sitcom
- 44 Hydrant hookups
- 45 Zone
- 46 Mishmash
- 47 Listing
- 48 Goblet part
- 49 Outer: pref.
- 52 Floor pad
- 53 "For — a jolly..."

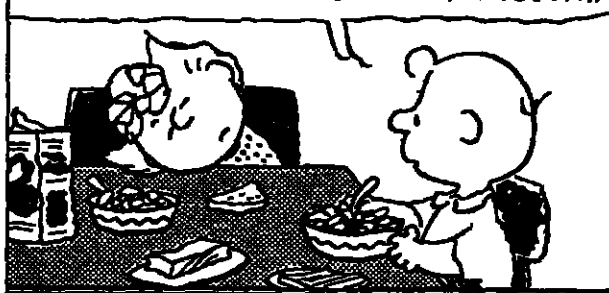
THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



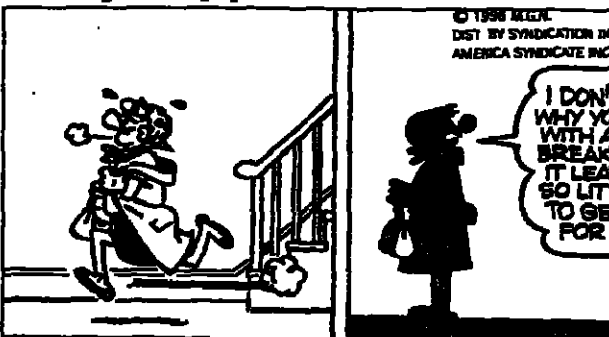
"Don't brush your teeth. Since I gave up coffee, your bad breath is the only thing that wakes me up in the morning!"

Peanuts

IF YOU'RE THAT TIRED, I WOULD SUGGEST THAT YOU GO TO BED TONIGHT AT SIX O'CLOCK..



Andy Capp

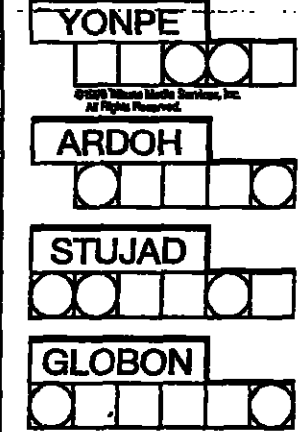


Mutt'n' Jeff



JUMBLE.

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.



Answer here: HE HAD

Yesterday's Jumble: ABBOT BRAVE MARINOT SEAMAN Answer: The vacationing friends considered themselves — ROAM MATES

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by Henri Arnold and Mike Argenton



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR TUESDAY JUNE 11, 1996

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Wright Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Early today handle civic affairs which are important, however, be careful of making mistakes. If a favour is needed to complete an important project, as some knowledgeable person early in the day for assistance.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You can easily expand where activities are concerned today, so get busy on them early. Make new fellow associates who can be helpful to your progress.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Get your practical affairs well-organised early in the day today, however, take no risks later this evening or you could lose security and thereby find yourself in a financial dilemma.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Find out early what a fellow associate expects of you today, then follow through energetically to get good results. Later this evening will be a good time to meet with a knowledgeable person and discuss some career plans.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You can begin the day today very wisely at your career activities, however, later some difficulties may crop up which need careful handling, so seek the advice of a bigwig and you will get the answers of your pressing questions.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You feel happy upon arising today and can make appointments for entertainment, however, be sure you find out what it will cost to handle festivities which you have planned for this evening with good friends.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Get home conditions in perfect order early today. Later this evening, annoyances may crop up which need quick handling to avoid some difficulty occurring. Be discriminating in the social activities which come about.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Make fine progress with routines in the morning today. Later, you have to solve difficult obstacles which come in your direction. Handle whatever you feel is important and complete any career activities you are given.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You understand how to get your affairs working more intelligently today and you can attend to such in the morning. Later this evening, will be good for you to spend some important time with your loved ones.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You have fine ideas for getting what you most want or need today. Utilise them patiently for best results and you will discover that your efforts will be rewarded with financial and personal success.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Consider well your inherent wishes and plan just how best to gain them today, then go after them courageously and thereby you will find success. Later tonight seek the advice of a bigwig for any business question you have.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You have a backer who can help you complete a fine project today. Do some investigating which will be helpful also in determining the best solution to some business difficulties which have come about.

Birthstone of June: Emerald — Citrine

Jordan Times, Tuesday, June, 11 1996

Israeli, French aviation industries to cooperate

helicopter programmes. I am sure this meeting will be an opportunity to generate more projects and agreements," he said.

"Israel can offer cheap development of programmes and special technologies, while the French industries can offer larger production lines and bigger markets," said David Harari, managing director of products and business development at Israel Aircraft Industries. "Until now there was no cooperation because of French political reasons."

Israeli aerospace and aviation industries already cooperate with the British, German and Italian companies, Mr. Harari said. "But the French industry, which holds nearly 40 per cent of the aviation industry in Europe, is very important."

He said companies on both sides had already identified areas of cooperation, but he would not provide details.

Any supplier that wins a contract worth more than five million dinars (\$17 million) must reinvest 30 per cent of that amount inside Kuwait or outside the country if it supports the government's foreign aid programme.

had been used to operating as wholly-owned entities had to change their approach when entering Asian countries where 100 per cent-owned institutions were not permitted.

"So banks were forced if they wanted to do business in this part of the world to figure out how to do it on a different basis and as they learned to do a joint venture, the learning experience involved and was applied to other markets as well," he added.

"I think Asia for many industries, including banking, is going to be a hot-house for vibrant new ideas which are going to be applied elsewhere in the world," he said.

A review of news from the Arabic press

****THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY** of the El-Zay Readywear Manufacturing Company has decided to raise the capital of the firm from JD 6 million to JD 7.5 million to be able to meet financing requirements for investments in new production lines. The shareholders authorised the board of directors to take the necessary measures to raise the capital through private subscription.

The company, which started operations in July 1995, generated a JD 93,300 net profit from sales amounting to JD 1.25 million in the second half of last year. Board chairman Nadim Muasher told the general assembly that 50 per cent of the sales were exported to the Italian company GFT and, through it, to Italian, British and other markets in Europe. Exports also reached the United Arab Emirates. Mr. Muasher said. He added that an agreement was signed with GFT under which the Italian company would buy 50 to 70 per cent of the Jordanian firm starting from 1996. As such, GFT has to supply El-Zay with all the raw material needed.

Noting that El-Zay exported 20,000 suits to GFT during the first four months of this year, Mr. Muasher said the company will be exporting a further 35,000 suits in 1996. He expected sales to reach JD 5 million this year based on a plan to raise the actual production capacity to 60 per cent of the overall capacity of 150,000 suits a year.


The general assembly authorised the board of directors to borrow from the banks to cover financing needs. El-Zay has secured JD 2 million credit facilities from the Arab Bank and the Jordan National Bank and JD 3 million loans for the same two banks as well as the Industrial Development Bank. The company's total assets at the end of 1995 amounted to JD 10.7 million compared to JD 8.5 million at the end of 1994. Shareholders' equity totalled JD 6.49 million. The GFT has a JD 400,000 or 7.3 per cent equity in the company. The amount is almost the same value that El-Zay paid to the Italian company for the experience and consultations it provided in setting up the company (Al Ra'i + Al Aswaq).

****THE ARAB CENTRE** for Pharmaceuticals and Chemicals suffered a 70.5 per cent plunge in net profit (from JD 1.1 million in 1994 to JD 327,000 in 1995). The general assembly approved the financial accounts for last year but some shareholders voiced criticism and raised questions over the financial and administrative dereliction at the company before Wasef Azar, the new chairman of the board, took over. Badie Qawasmii, the former chairman and general manager, was replaced at the beginning of this year.

Financial Markets

Jordan Times

in co-operation with
Cairo Amman Bank



Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Date: June - 9 - 1998

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.7081	0.7100
Sterling Pound	1.0867	1.0921
Deutsche Mark	0.4603	0.4626
Swiss Franc	0.5570	0.5598
French Franc	0.1359	0.1366
Japanese Yen*	0.6477	0.6508
Dutch Guilder	0.4111	0.4132
Swedish Krona	-	-
Italian Lira*	0.0456	0.0458
Netherlands Franc	-	-

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Monday.

One U.S. dollar	1.3630/40 1.5352/62 1.7174/84 1.2668/78 31.57/61 5.2002/52 1550.4/1.9 108.91/01 6.7460/60 6.5640/90 5.9266/16 1.4085/95 0.7926/31 7.7400/10	Canadian dollar Deutschemarks Dutch guilders Swiss francs Belgian francs French francs Italian lire Japanese yen Swedish crowns Norwegian crowns Danish crowns Singapore dollars Australian dollars Hong Kong dollar
One Sterling Gold (ounce)	\$1.5328/38 \$385.80/386.30	

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Bulls demolish Sonics to go up 3-0 in NBA finals

SEATTLE (R) — Michael Jordan scored 36 points as the Chicago Bulls demolished the Seattle SuperSonics 108-86 Sunday to move within one victory of a sweep of the NBA finals and the best season in league history.

"That was a spectacular game for our team," said Chicago coach Phil Jackson. "Obviously Michael carried us the first half and we got a great contribution from everybody the second half."

Jordan scored 12 first-quarter points, four fewer than all the Sonics, and 27 in the first half, 11 fewer than the entire Seattle team. He shot 11-for-23 from the field, 3-of-4 from long range, and was 11-for-11 from the foul line.

Australian Luc Longley added 19 points, a career playoff high, as the Bulls went up 3-0 in the best-of-seven finals. No team has ever recovered from a 3-0 deficit to win the NBA championship.

Detlef Schrempf scored 20 points and Gary Payton 19 for the Sonics, who never led. The Bulls used constant double-teaming to hold Seattle main man Shawn Kemp, who had 61 points in the first two games, to just 14 points on seven shots from the field and six free throws.

The Sonics turned the ball over 20 times, 13 times in the first half, to just nine total for Chicago.

"We all took a whipping tonight," said Seattle coach George Karl.

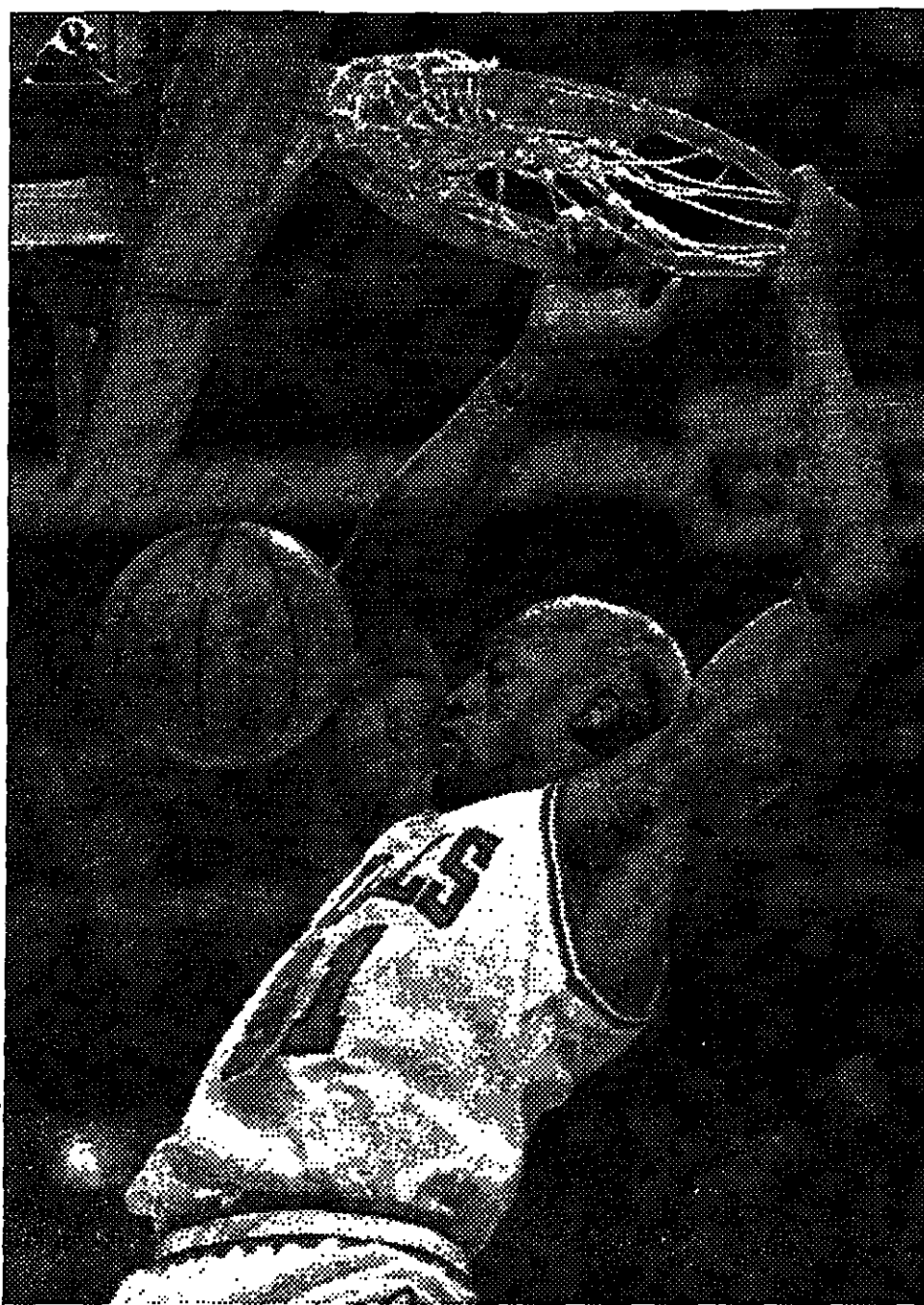
The Bulls, after a record 72-10 regular season, have now gone 14-1 in the playoffs. No team has ever finished 15-1 in the post-season, although Julius Erving's Philadelphia 76ers lost just one game in 1983 when the playoffs were one round shorter.

The Sonics, after losing three games in a row for the first time all season, had hoped their homecourt would help them climb back into the series after two losses in Chicago. Now they must win here on Wednesday just to stay alive.

"It's upsetting to me to come back to our gym and lose the way we did," said Kemp. "The only place it leaves you is to come back fighting."

Chicago jumped ahead by 18 points at the end of the first quarter and then, with Jordan scoring 15 bulls points in a row, led by 24 at the half, 62-38.

"The first half we came out and basically took the



Dennis Rodman of the Chicago Bulls hangs on to the rim after a slam dunk (Reuters photo)

crowd out of the game," said Jordan, "that took some of their momentum out early. From that point on I think we tried to control everything and we pretty much did."

"We didn't come to play in the first quarter," said Payton. "When we got down by 20 it was hard to come back against a very good team like them."

Payton said Jordan's confidence had gone to "another level" in his 15-point run. "We didn't pressure him like we should have," said Payton.

Payton had to go a grueling 45 minutes, mainly at the demanding point guard position, in the absence of the injured Nate McMillan. He still managed to shoot 7-for-15 and hand out nine assists. But he admitted the basket looked different to him than to Jordan.

"It might be an ocean to him, but it's a basket with a net to me," said Payton.

The Bulls had to withstand a Seattle charge in the third quarter that sliced the lead by 10 points as the Sonics outscored Chicago 23-13. The Sonics used a 9-0 run and then a 7-0 streak started by a rare Frank Brickowski three-pointer and featuring blocks by Kemp and Brickowski that brought the mostly quiet Seattle fans to their feet.

The score was now 66-54, a 12-point margin the Sonics would equal twice more before the third period ended with the Bulls up 75-61.

But Seattle never got within 14 again as Jordan started the fourth quarter with five points in a 6-0 Chicago run.

"It was very refreshing to see the Chicago Bulls bust out," said Dennis Rodman, who snared a game-high 10 rebounds. "When they do that, no team in the world can beat them."

Rodman, who refused to

get drawn into fights several times in confrontations with Brickowski and others, added: "Seattle is totally out of their rhythm. All they're doing now is trying to mess with me, trying to get in my head. They don't understand, you can't mess with the master."

Toni Kukoc scored 14 points and had seven assists while Scottie Pippen had 12 points and nine assists for Chicago, which played without starting guard Ron Harper. Jackson said Harper told him his back injury was hurting him in warmups, and Kukoc started in his place.

Seattle wound up shooting 45 percent (39 percent in the first quarter) to Chicago's 50 percent. The Sonics finished 4-for-16 (25 percent) from three-point range while Chicago was 15-for-25 (47 percent) from long range.

"They're a great team," said Payton of the Bulls.

Galaxy remain only unbeaten team in U.S. soccer league

EAST RUTHERFORD, New Jersey (R) — The Los Angeles Galaxy completed a successful east coast swing Sunday, rolling over the New York/New Jersey MetroStars 4-0 to remain the only unbeaten team in Major League Soccer.

It was the Galaxy's third victory in eight days. The Western Conference leaders defeated the Tampa Bay Mutiny 2-1 last Sunday and outlasted the New England Revolution in a shootout Thursday 3-2.

Eduardo Hurtado, who scored for Ecuador in its 2-0 upset over Argentina in a World Cup qualifier last week, scored the Galaxy's first three goals and set up the fourth as Los Angeles won its 10th consecutive match.

Hurtado scored in the 14th, 26th and 81st minutes — the third hat-trick in league history — before he set up Ante Razov's goal with four minutes remaining.

Andrew Shue, a member of the cast of the TV show *Melrose Place*, came on as a second-half substitute and assisted on Razov's goal before a crowd of 53,250 at Giants Stadium, the second largest crowd in league history. The teams played in front of 69,255 at the Rose Bowl on April 13.

On Thursday, the Galaxy overcame New England in a shootout, 3-2, as Mexican goalkeeper Jorge Campos made

three saves. U.S. International Cobi Jones and Mark Semioli scored for the Galaxy.

Tampa Bay (8-3), the Eastern Conference leaders, also won twice last week, besting the Kansas City Wizards Wednesday, 3-1, and then the Colorado Rapids on Saturday, 2-1.

Martin Vasquez scored the game-winner in the against the Rapids (4-7) as his 25-yard shot was stopped by goalkeeper Dusty Haddock, but the ball slipped from his grasp and rolled over the goal line. Diego Viera also tallied for the winners, former U.S. International Jean Harbour for the Rapids.

The Kansas City Wizards (5-7) overcame a 3-1 halftime deficit, to record a 4-3 shootout victory over the slumping Columbus Crew, who have lost five consecutive matches. The Wizards won the shootout, 3-1. Preki scored one goal and set up two others — by Zimbabwe international Digby Takawira and Scott Uderitz in Columbus, Ohio. Adrian Panik scored once and Pete Marino once for the Crew (3-8).

Mexican Hugo Sanchez and Jason Kreis scored within two minutes of each other early in the first half to spark the Dallas Burn (7-5) to a 4-1 win over the San Jose Clash (5-7) in Dallas. San Jose lost twice during the week, including a 3-1 decision to D.C. United.

Nomo leads Dodgers past Reds; Pirates blank Padres

LOS ANGELES (R) — Eric Karros homered and doubled home the tie-breaking run and Hideo Nomo earned his first win in more than three weeks as the Los Angeles Dodgers defeated the Cincinnati Reds 3-2 on Sunday.

Karros hit a solo homer in the second inning and had an RBI double in a two-run eighth inning rally to snap a 2-2 tie.

Nomo (7-5) pitched eight innings and allowed two runs on five hits to earn his first win since May 17th. Nomo also had a pair of doubles for the first extra-base hits of his career.

In Chicago, Ryne Sandberg belted a three-run homer in the seventh inning, and Steve Trachsel allowed one earned run in seven innings for his first win in five starts as the Chicago Cubs beat the Montreal Expos 4-2.

Sandberg homered after Sammy Sosa doubled off Kirk Rueter with two out and Leo Gomez walked. Dave Veres relieved and Sandberg greeted him with his 13th homer to left to make it 4-2.

In Colorado, John Smoltz came within two outs of a shutout and Jeff Blaser drove in three runs as the Atlanta Braves finally cooled off the Colorado Rockies with an 8-3 win.

The Braves allowed 35 runs in losing the first two games behind Greg Maddux and Tom Glavine, but Smoltz took a shutout into the ninth, when he gave up an RBI single to John Vander Wal and a two-run homer to Trenidad Hubbard. Mark Wohlers got the final two outs.

In Houston, Ricky Gutierrez hit a two-out, two-run single in the bottom of the seventh inning and right fielder Derrick May threw out the potential tying run at the plate to end the game as the Houston Astros edged the Philadelphia Phillies 2-1 completing a three-game sweep.

"We start a series in Colorado (Monday), so going 5-1 and sweeping the Phillies on this homestand was necessary," said Houston's Craig Biggio.

In New York, Jason Istringhausen pitched a six-hitter for his first career shutout and Butch Huskey homered to lead the New York Mets to a 3-0 victory over the Florida Marlins.

It was the first nine-inning complete game in 27 Major League starts for Istringhausen, who was credited with one in a rain-shortened contest last season.

In San Diego, Danny Darwin and Jason Christiansen combined on a six-hit shutout, and Carlos Garcia doubled in two runs



Atlanta Braves' starting pitcher John Smoltz delivers a pitch during the first inning against the Colorado Rockies, June 9 in Denver. Smoltz won his twelfth victory with seven hits scattered over eight and a third innings in the Braves' 8-3 win over the Rockies (Reuters photo)

in a five-run sixth inning as the Pittsburgh Pirates blanked the San Diego Padres 6-0.

Darwin (4-6) allowed five hits and no walks with four strikeouts in eight innings. He also pitched eight scoreless innings on Tuesday at Los Angeles.

In San Francisco, Allen Watson combined with two relievers on an eight-inning shutout to beat his former team for the second time, and Matt Williams homered and drove in three runs to power the San Francisco Giants to a 9-0 romp over the St. Louis Cardinals.

Mark Carreon added three doubles and two RBIs for the giants, who have won five of their last seven games. In the American League, Dwight Gooden gave up a run in eight strong innings and Tino Martinez had three hits and drove in a run as the New York Yankees averted a three-game sweep against the lowly Detroit Tigers with a 3-2 victory Sunday.

Gooden (5-4) gave up four hits and struck out six. "Dwight's performance, as far as I was concerned, was better than his no-hitter," Yankees manager Joe Torre said. "His curve today

and the ability to throw it at any time made his fastball four of five miles an hour faster. His location today was terrific."

In Baltimore, Danny Tartabull drove in three runs in an eight-run fourth inning and Robin Ventura's RBI double put Chicago ahead to stay and the White Sox hung on for a 12-9 victory over the Baltimore Orioles and a three-game series sweep.

The red-hot White Sox are 9-1 in their last 10 games and 18-3 in their last 21, a streak that has pulled them into a first-place tie with the Cleveland Indians in the American League central.

In Boston, John Jaha's three-run triple in the top of the 10th inning lifted the Milwaukee Brewers to their fourth win in five games, an 11-8 victory over the Boston Red Sox.

"Believe it or not, I was just trying to make contact on that game-winning hit," Jaha said. "I actually shortened my swing but I have enough strength to drive the ball a long way."

In Cleveland, J.T. Snow homered from each side of the plate, including a two-run shot to snap a tie in the

13th inning, as the California Angels ended a six-game losing streak with an 8-6 victory over the Cleveland Indians.

The loss snapped Cleveland's three-game winning streak and dropped the Indians into a tie with the Chicago White Sox for first place in the central division.

Carlos Baerga forced extra innings with a sacrifice fly.

In Kansas City, Dan Wilson hit a two-run homer and Ken Griffey Junior blasted his 20th home run of the year to lead the Seattle Mariners to a 3-2 victory over the Kansas City Royals.

At Minnesota, Scott Stahoviak's two-run homer in the fourth inning put Minnesota ahead and Frank Rodriguez made it stand up with his second complete game as the Minnesota Twins beat the Oakland Athletics 5-3.

At Texas, Juan Gonzalez capped a five-run third inning with a three-run homer and the Texas Rangers hung on for an 8-6 victory over the Toronto Blue Jays.

Kafelnikov enjoys bumper pay-day, moves up to 5th

PARIS (R) — It was payday for the hardest working man in tennis on Sunday.

Yevgeny Kafelnikov, who has played more matches than any other player in each of the last two years, was working overtime again this weekend, and his extended shift earned him a pair of French Open grand slam titles and \$840,000 in prize money.

On Saturday Kafelnikov teamed up with Czech Daniel Vacek to win the doubles. He was back on centre court on Sunday to beat former Wimbledon champion Michael Stich of Germany 7-6 7-5 7-6 and become the first Russian to win a singles grand slam event.

"Playing so many tournaments, so many matches really helps me because

that's the way I'm able to keep my confidence at a very high level," said Kafelnikov, who played in 167 matches last year and 171 the year before.

"I took two weeks off once, then I was out of shape for the next three weeks. I became a totally different player."

But Kafelnikov will reward himself for becoming the first man since Australian Ken Rosewall in 1968 to claim both French Open titles with a few rare days of rest in his home town, the Black Sea resort of Sochi.

Once there, he will indulge in two of his favourite pastimes — fishing and soccer — and relax in front of the television watching Russia's soccer team play in the European

championship.

There will be no celebrations. Kafelnikov like many famous and wealthy Russian athletes, keeps a low profile following recent attempts to extort and blackmail the country's "nouveau riche".

"They public want to know more about my private life and I just really don't want to tell too much about myself, where I live, how I live, the way I practise, the way I behave."

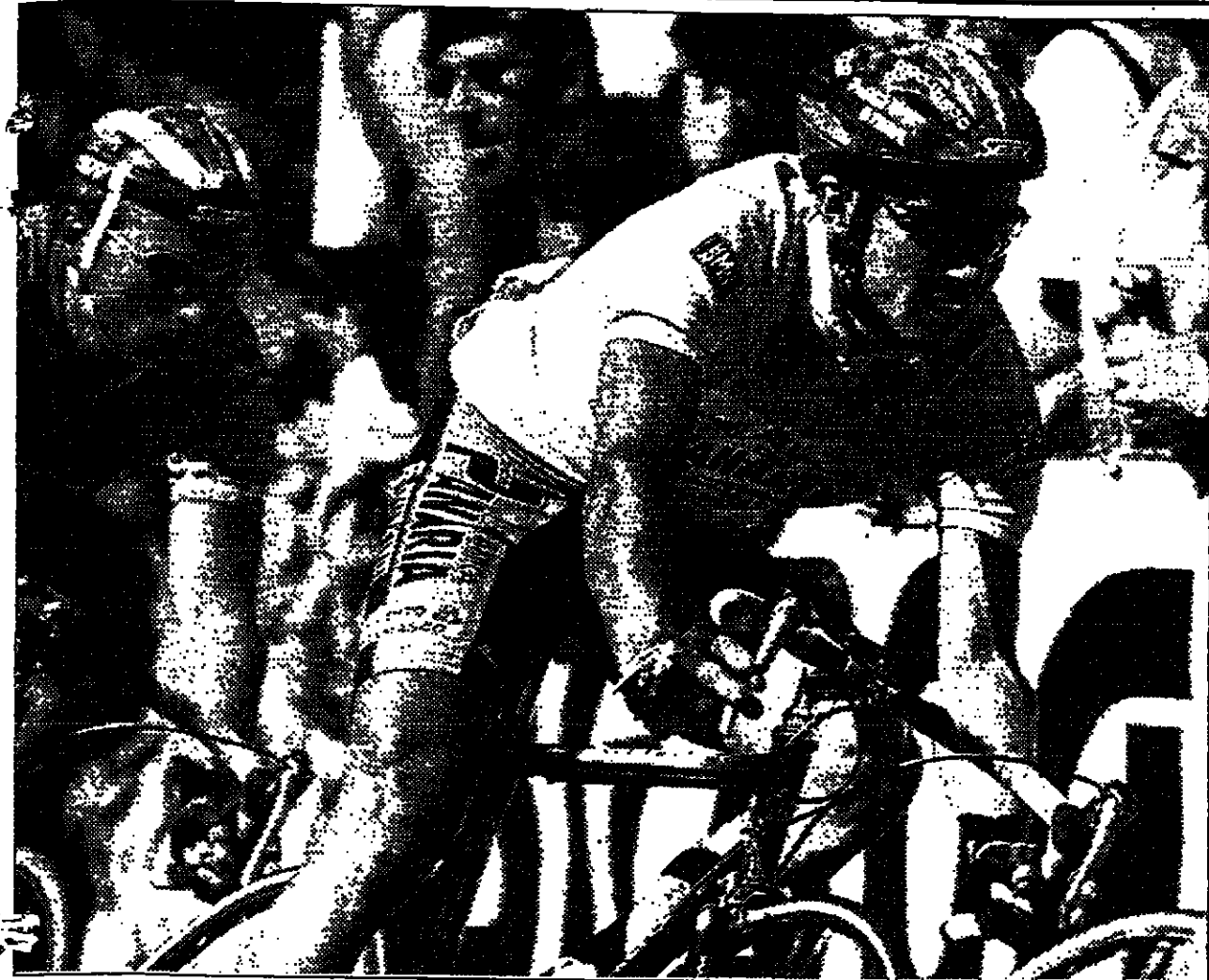
Already one of Russia's best known sportsmen, Kafelnikov is sure to attract more attention following his historic win, which takes him to fifth in the world rankings.

"Everyone now will expect me to become number one but it doesn't mean because I won here that I

Leading ATP Tour rankings	
1. Andre Agassi	4,314
2. Thomas Muster	3,751
3. Andre Agassi	3,679
4. Boris Becker	3,409
5. Yevgeny Kafelnikov	3,179
6. Andre Agassi	3,167
7. Greg Rusedski	2,834
8. Andre Agassi	2,833
9. Thomas Muster	2,722
10. Michael Stich	2,618
11. Michael Stich	2,594
12. Wayne Ferreira	2,523
13. Mark Philippoussis	2,523
14. R. Krajicek	2,433
15. Andre Agassi	2,384
16. Andre Agassi	2,379
17. Andre Agassi	2,369
18. Andre Agassi	2,369
19. M. Williams	2,311
20. Carlos Moye	2,260

will be number one," he said. "I'll have to stay much more focused than I was before."

<p>TODAY AT</p>	<p>PHILADELPHIA</p> <p>Before Sunrise</p> <p>Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30</p>	<p>PLAZA</p> <p>Excessive force</p> <p>Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 5:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30</p>	<p>CONCORD</p> <p>CONCORD "1"</p> <p>Clint Eastwood & Meryl Streep</p> <p>* The Bridges of Madison County</p> <p>Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30</p> <p>CONCORD "2"</p> <p>* Mrs. Doubtfire Show: 3:30</p> <p>Under Siege</p> <p>Shows: 6:30, 8:30, 10:30</p>	<p>Brumfield Theatre & Cinema</p> <p>TEL: 625-7730</p> <p>Will Shortly present Zawad Weld Awad theatre group in a play entitled</p> <p>Five-Star Government</p> <p>Starring comedians:</p> <p>Mahmoud Saimah & Hussein Tubeishat</p>	<p>Nabil & Hisham's Theatre</p> <p>TEL: 625-155</p> <p>PRESENTS</p> <p>THE SATIRICAL COMEDY</p> <p>Arab Human Rights</p> <p>Starts Monday, May 13</p> <p>at 8:30 p.m.</p> <p>For reservation please call</p> <p>625155 - 640155</p>
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Russian Pavel Tonkov, winner of the 79th Giro d'Italia, strides during the last 176-km 22nd stage Sondrio to Milan. (Reuters photo)

Tonkov sets sights on Tour de France debut

MILAN (R) — Hours after his most important victory, Giro d'Italia winner Pavel Tonkov set his sights even higher — his Tour de France debut.

"I am taking a week off to recuperate, but I will still train in preparation for the tour," the 27-year-old Russian said Sunday.

"I am not racing in the tour of Switzerland, so that I can be right for this next important date. I am sure I can win some stages, and possibly even figure high in the overall standings."

Tonkov claimed overall victory in the 3,990-km Giro by two minutes and 43 seconds over Italian Ernesto Zaina. World champion Abraham Olano of Spain followed in third place.

"Saturday in the Giro was a great day for me because I could attack Abraham Olano. I did not make any mistakes because I could control the race," he said.

The three-week Tour de France starts at Den Bosch in the

Netherlands on June 29.

Tonkov said the Olympics in Atlanta were also on his timetable, but first he had to be selected.

"I will return to Russia for the selection race on June 23 at Gorki," he said.

The Russian worked hard to overcome a number of setbacks before winning the coveted Giro.

An accident in 1993 required two operations on his right knee and he was out of action for six months.

He spent last winter working with weights to improve his physique, particularly the muscles in his right thigh which had wasted following the operations.

"I am sure this victory will change my life," said Tonkov who although a professional racer for five years still holds a rank in the Russian army.

As an amateur he scored 110 successes, and nine years ago became world junior road race champion at his adopted town, Bergamo in Italy.

Sacchi: Italy must not lose to Russia

LIVERPOOL (R) — Italian coach Arrigo Sacchi has told his players in no uncertain terms they cannot afford to lose their first Euro '96 game against Russia on Tuesday if they are to qualify from the so-called "group of death".

Tournament favourites Germany look certain to make the quarter-finals after an easy 2-0 win over the Czechs on Sunday, leaving Italy and Russia to fight it out for the other place from Group C.

"I want maximum commitment against Russia," said Sacchi, whose main task is to pick two strikers from the experienced pair of Fabrizio Ravanelli and Gianfranco Zola as well as skilled youngster Enrico Chiesa.

Whoever does play up front will relish tearing into an under-strength Russian defence, robbed through injury of its first-choice full-backs and further weakened by the suspension of the sharp-shooting Yuri Nikiforov.

Another worry for Russian manager Oleg Romantsev is that neither his defenders nor attackers look totally comfortable in the air and it was no coincidence the squad spent much of one recent training session practising headers.

The Italian media, however, is billing the match as a contest between captain Paolo Maldini — widely regarded as the best defender in the world — and fleet-footed winger Andrei Kanchelskis, who said he was looking forward to the game.

"I've played against Maldini twice before. It doesn't bother me — how else can you judge how good you are unless you test yourself against the elite?" he said.

Romantsev has already consulted the three igors — Kolyvanov, Shalimov and Simutenkov — who all play in Italy.

Euro '96

Scots hold Dutch to draw

BIRMINGHAM (AFP) — A hotly disputed handball in the first two minutes enabled Scotland to escape with a 0-0 draw against Holland in their opening Euro '96 match here Tuesday.

Celtic midfielder John Collins handled on the line from a Clarence Seedorf shot, but referee Leif Sundell of Sweden ignored it and waved play on.

It was a vital escape for Scotland who were under pressure for most of the game and spent the last 20 minutes hanging on.

This means that all four teams in Group A are level with a point each following England's 1-1 draw with Switzerland Saturday.

The Dutch had a handful of great chances, but Scotland kept scrambling the ball away from just a few yards out.

After a first half full of chances at both ends, the Dutch managed to push Scotland back in the second half.

But Dennis Bergkamp and Edgar Davids were off form, and Andy Goram in the Scottish goal and Colin Hendry in defence out-

standing, while the Scottish midfield passed far more neatly than had been expected.

The Dutch clearly missed Frank de Boer and Danny Blind in central defence — Johan de Kock's build-up was never incisive.

Richard Witschge at left-half was Holland's best player, spreading his passes across the pitch before he was replaced by Philip Cocu 10 minutes before the end.

After just five minutes, Bergkamp came down the left and fed Seedorf, whose shot from eight yards out was well parried by Goram, before Gaston Taument hooked the rebound over the bar.

Ronald de Boer almost managed to walk the resulting corner into the goal.

Scotland were starting to pass fluently and by the end of the half had at least as much of the play as Holland.

But after the interval,

Holland managed to lock the Scots into their own half. In the 52nd minute, a Gaston Taument cross found Seedorf, whose downward header bounced just over Goram's bar.

Patrick Kluivert, struggling with a knee problem, replaced Taument but was seldom dangerous.

And in the 83rd minute, Colin Hendry headed off the line to save Scotland yet again and enable them to go into Saturday's match with England in confident mood.

Scotland have laid the foundations for reaching the first second phase of a major tournament — World Cup or European Championships — in their history.

Scottish odds have been cut from 80-1 to 66-1 after this result.

Tuesday's Euro '96 schedule on JTV

Italy vs Russia	6:30 p.m. Channel 2
Croatia vs Turkey	9:30 p.m. Channel 1

Croats fired up for opener against Turkey

NOTTINGHAM (R) — Croatia, the small new republic just emerging from the ravages of war, need little motivation when they meet Turkey in their Euro 96 Group D opener Tuesday.

The suffering of their compatriots has galvanised the national team into a tight-knit unit, aware of the impact they can make in the finals of their first major championship.

"We've had a year's peace but we are really motivated to win for Croatia," said striker Davor Suker.

Captain Zvonimir Boban of AC Milan said: "Football is more important than any other sport to the people of Croatia."

But they are not underestimating Turkey, whose last major tournament was the

1954 World Cup and who are playing in their first European Championship finals.

"It will be a very, very hard game, the most difficult one for us," said England-based central defender Slaven Bilic.

"It will be the first game Croatia play in a major tournament and there will be a lot of nerves, a lot of pressure," the West Ham defender said in a British newspaper column.

Turkey could use their fast, counter-attacking game to good effect against a Croatian side who feel they are still not playing quite as they would like to be. "We are too slow and we need to change our style in time for our first match," said Bilic.

Suker pointed to a glut of

talented players in attack who have made Croatia the dark horses of the tournament, wanting to go forward constantly and leaving themselves open at the back.

"We've a lot of players who like to attack, but in modern football you have to defend first," said Real Madrid's new signing.

The Turks, who can count on the vociferous support of more than 20,000 fans at Nottingham Forest's city ground, are in buoyant spirits, believing they hold the balance in the group.

Turkey prefer to look at themselves as a new nation like Croatia in terms of soccer, throwing off the shackles of an unsuccessful past and looking ahead to greater things such as the 1998 World Cup.

Danes heap praise on Schmeichel and Portugal

SHEFFIELD (R) — Peter Schmeichel, the saviour of Manchester United on many occasions last season, was hailed as the hero of Denmark on Sunday.

His teammates also waxed lyrical about the silky skills of their Portuguese opponents.

"Peter was brilliant," said central defender Marc Rieper. "I've said before that he is the best goalkeeper in the world and I think he proved it again today. In

fact, he proves it almost every time he plays."

"Everyone says that Eric Cantona won the (English championship) title for Manchester United but they won a lot of games 1-0 and Schmeichel saved them in a lot of them."

Rieper was singing Schmeichel's praises even though the two had a blazing row near the end of the drawn game over a misunderstanding which nearly let Tavares grab a last-gasp

winner for Portugal.

"Both players went to ease out a cross but pulled out at the last minute, leaving Tavares with a gilt-edge chance he wasted with a mis-hit shot."

"I didn't hear him coming," said Rieper. "It's something that shouldn't have happened. He would probably say something different but I didn't hear him shout and the ball wasn't on the edge of the box."

"I have given him a bit of a roasting and he has given me one but it's now all over."

The Danes were impressed with the skilful quick-passing game employed by the Portuguese who probably pro-

vided the closest thing to south-American flair that Euro 96 is likely to see.

"Portugal are a very, very good team. They have some brilliant players, who are technically perfect," said Denmark coach Richard Moller-Nielsen. "It was very difficult to keep the ball in the opponents' half because Portugal are very clever with the ball."

"Portugal were better on the ball than we were, they had a lot of possession," said sweeper Jes Hogn.

Portugal coach Antonio Oliveira was more subdued. "Normally, I would have been happy with a draw but this time I'm a bit disappointed," he said.

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Iraq food distribution plan is ready, U.N. says

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq is rushing to implement a food distribution plan which is part of its oil-for-food deal with the U.N., a senior United Nations official said on Monday.

"We expect them to complete it any time. They know the matter is urgent and they are working on it on urgent basis," Iraq's U.N. Coordinator Mohammad Zejjari told Reuters.

The scheme is part of formalities which the Baghdad government must carry out prior to starting partial oil sales allowed under its May 20 pact with the U.N.

The oil deal permits Iraq sales worth \$2 billion in six months to enable it to pay for desperately needed food and medical supplies as well as other goods of a humanitarian nature.

The sales are exempt from U.N. sanctions imposed after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Mr. Zejjari did not say when Iraq would be in a position to start pumping its crude to the outside world and generate funds for the purchase of food and medical supplies.

"This will depend on the completion of all formalities, including the distribution plan," he said.

A visiting team of seven U.N. experts, including customs and oil specialists, is in Iraq inspecting its oil installations and pipeline network to prepare the ground for the stationing of U.N. oil monitors.

"When all these formalities are in place the (U.N.) secretary-general will report to the Security Council and only then matters will start," Mr. Zejjari said.

He said U.N. relief agencies in Iraq had drawn up distribution plans for the three northern provinces of Dohuk, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah, currently outside the control of the central government in Baghdad.

Mr. Zejjari said under the deal the Iraqi government was responsible for the drawing up of distribution plans and the actual handing out of food in areas other than the three Kurdish rebel-held provinces in the north.

Under the deal U.N. personnel are to observe that food distribution in Iraq is carried out in an equitable manner and Mr. Zejjari said he intended to increase the number of his international and local staff to do the job properly.

"We have drawn up plans for access to information on food distribution. There will be field visits. There will be contacts with people. There will be surveys."

"All these things should enable the U.N. to be fully informed of the equitable distribution of goods," Mr. Zejjari said.

Apart from food and medicine, Mr. Zejjari said, Iraq was looking for badly needed equipment and spare parts to revamp the infrastructure of its health sector, power grid and sewage system.

Other priorities, he added, included agricultural imports for small farmers and educational materials.

U.N. team arrives

With one inspection team busy dismantling a biological weapons plant, a second team specialising in long-range missiles arrived Monday to conduct a separate investigation.

Iraq must convince the U.N. inspectors that it has destroyed all its weapons of mass destruction before the U.N. Security Council will lift the sanctions.

Despite repeated confrontations over the years, U.N. officials say they have been getting reasonably good cooperation in recent months.

One visiting U.N. team is working with Iraqi officials to destroy the Al Hakam biological weapons plant, 80 kilometres southwest of Baghdad. The operation began three weeks ago and is expected to last about one more week.

"Al Hakam is now more or less levelled. All areas will be destroyed, all equipment will be destroyed using high explosives," said Goran Wallen, a retired Swedish admiral who runs the U.N. monitoring operation in Baghdad.

Meanwhile, a second visiting U.N. team, consisting of 50 missile experts arrived in Baghdad on Sunday and Monday.



A 30 member team of U.N. experts, headed by Russian ballistic expert Nikita Smidovitch, disembarks from a bus in Baghdad on Monday after arriving on a mission related to Iraq's missiles programme (Reuters photo)

Kuwait Hizbollah supplied arms to Bahrain plotters, newspaper reports

KUWAIT (Agencies) — A Kuwaiti unit of the pro-Iranian Hizbollah has sent weapons to fellow members in Bahrain where officials have accused militants of plotting to topple the government, a Kuwaiti newspaper said on Monday.

"Al Ahba learnt that Kuwaiti Hizbollah was buying the weapons left by the Iraqi army before it fled Kuwait for the benefit of the members of the Bahraini Hizbollah," the daily said in a report from the Bahraini capital Manama.

Al Anba said Kuwaiti Hizbollah was one of 17 similar groups created by Iran in Arab and some European Union (EU) countries. The Kuwaiti group was unheard of until Bahrain said last week it had foiled a plot by what it called the military wing of Hizbollah-Bahrain to topple the emir's government by armed revolution and install a pro-Iranian regime.

Iran denied interfering in Bahrain, where members of the majority Shi'ite Muslim community demanding political and economic reforms, have waged an 18-month campaign of bombings, arson and sabotage against the Sunni dominated government.

Al Anba did not say who was selling the weapons to the Kuwaiti militants. Some Kuwaitis are believed to have stored Iraqi weapons after the liberation of Kuwait in 1991, which the Interior Ministry has been trying to confiscate.

"Some of the (light) arms

were smuggled to Bahrain, while relatively heavier weapons were sent by sea," the paper said, but did not elaborate.

Iraqi troops left behind huge amounts of weapons and ammunition in Kuwait after U.S.-led multinational forces ended their seven-month occupation of the emirate in 1991.

Kuwaiti officials did not have any immediate comment on the newspaper report.

The Kuwaiti paper said Bahrain last week arrested five Bahrainis for smuggling arms soon after they arrived from Kuwait. It did not give details.

Bahrain wants good relations with Iran and is confident the Islamic republic will end its alleged efforts to destabilise the government in Manama, the Bahraini foreign minister said Monday.

"We hope to have good relations with Iran, and only want our neighbour to know that Islam calls for peace," Sheikh Mohammad Ben Mubarak told the Kuwaiti daily Al Seyassah.

"I believe that everything now is finished, and that the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) understood our message and reacted appropriately," the minister said.

He said all the evidence gathered over two years pointed toward Iranian involvement and was consistent with Tehran's past record.

"Iran has long been accused of conspiracies and then denies them. That is the

Iranian style and approach which was also clear in Algeria, Egypt and Saudi Arabia," he said.

Iran has denied any involvement in the unrest in Bahrain.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Maleki said Monday his country was ready to send a delegation to Manama to investigate the Bahraini charges. Tehran has also offered to mediate between the government and opposition.

"I hope they would correct their mistake and we are ready to send a delegation to Manama to review documents stating charges and clarify them," Mr. Maleki told the daily newspaper Iran.

"Iran has always respected Bahrain's sovereignty since the Gulf archipelago became independent in 1971," said Mr. Maleki, who visited Bahrain in January to discuss strained ties between the two neighbours.

Iran and Bahrain recalled their ambassadors last week. Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati called Sunday for dialogue between the Bahraini government and opposition leaders to end the unrest.

But an official Bahraini daily rejected Iran's offers of mediation with the opposition. "No, Mr. Velayati, Bahrain's capital is Manama and not Tehran," said Al Ayyam.

"Bahrain will never let your representative touch our soil, as you have done in

Lebanon," the paper said, in apparent reference to the Iranian-backed Hizbollah movement in Lebanon.

"Countries have their sovereignty, therefore stop causing trouble and end your plots. Let our people achieve their programme of development and live free of your meddling influence," Al Ayyam added.

The Lebanese Hizbollah said meanwhile it does not train non-Lebanese Islamists but has links with some fundamentalist groups in Arab and Muslim countries.

"In Lebanon we train and work in resisting Israel. We do not train or assist any party in the Arab and Islamic world with regard to their internal affairs," Beirut newspaper Al Safir quoted Hizbollah Deputy Secretary General Sheikh Naeem Qassem as saying.

"There is not one Bahraini, Kurdish, or Algerian (trained in Lebanon) and we challenge anyone to get evidence of such a thing," Mr. Qassem said.

Mr. Qassem acknowledged his group had contacts with several Islamic groups including the international Muslim Brotherhood Organisation, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and Hamas and the Islamic movement in Sudan.

"As for the Islamic front in Algeria, it's a general acquaintance with a number of its leaders in exile... and for the Islamic group of Egypt, we don't know those at all," he added.

Barak accused of plotting Labour coup against Peres

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Outgoing Foreign Minister Ehud Barak called off a planned meeting Monday of senior Labour Party officials after rivals charged he was plotting to oust defeated Prime Minister Shimon Peres as party leader.

Mr. Barak was scheduled to meet in his Tel Aviv office with several outgoing ministers and Labour deputies following Mr. Peres' defeat by Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu in national elections last month.

But his office said the meeting was postponed "due to the security situation" — an apparent reference to the killing of five Israeli soldiers by Hizbollah guerrillas in South Lebanon early Monday and the overnight slaying of two Israelis near Jerusalem by suspected Palestinian militants.

Officials said Mr. Peres had called a meeting of his inner security cabinet to discuss the security situation at the same time as the foreign minister's planned gathering. Mr. Barak is a member of the security cabinet.

Mr. Barak had earlier said the meeting would involve informal discussions of the election defeat and other party issues.

But Peres aides and Mr. Barak's rivals in the party charged the former army chief of staff was seeking to move up leadership elections in a bid to oust Mr. Peres. "It is not right to try and oust Peres, it shows a real lack of respect," Haim Ramon, the outgoing interior minister and Mr. Barak's main rival in the party, told Israel Radio earlier Monday.

Another Labour Official who spoke on condition of anonymity said he had been invited to Monday's meeting but declined, calling the gathering "a coup attempt against the party leader."

Under Labour Party regulations, a leadership election would not be held for another 14 months. But following Mr. Peres' defeat in the May 29 polls, press reports said Mr. Barak wanted the vote moved up to December.

Mr. Barak, a 54-year-old

political newcomer who only joined Labour last year after leaving the army, and Mr. Ramon have been openly feuding since the Peres election defeat. They accuse each other of being responsible for the loss.

Mr. Barak headed Mr. Peres' election campaign for prime minister while Mr. Ramon was in charge of public relations for the overall Labour campaign.

Press reports said Monday's meeting was to have been attended notably by Finance Minister Avraham Shohat, Housing Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer, Justice Minister David Libai and Deputy Defence Minister Ori Orr — leading figures of the hawkish wing of Labour in contrast to the left-leaning camp around Mr. Ramon.

Mr. Peres has declined to comment publicly on his plans, although aides said he wanted to finish out his mandate as Labour leader to help stabilise the party following the election defeat and prepare a smooth transition to a new leader.

Syrian press urges Arab countries to shun Israel

DAMASCUS (R) — Syria said on Monday Israel's hard-line leader Benjamin Netanyahu was adopting a programme of "war and expansion" and urged Arabs not to establish ties with Israel.

Syria's official press, gearing for an Arab summit in Cairo on June 21 to discuss the future of Middle East peace, said Mr. Netanyahu's election as Israel's prime minister had removed all justifications for Arabs to have ties with the Jewish state.

"Netanyahu's draft programme which was deliberately leaked to the Israeli press shows that he will not abandon the policy of aggression and expansion to adopt a policy of war," the official daily Al Baath said.

"How could ties be made with such a government," it asked.

Mr. Netanyahu, who narrowly beat current Premier Shimon Peres in Israel's elections last month, opposes the return of Israeli-occupied Arab land.

Another official daily, Tishreen, said the Israelis had countered the readiness by some Arab states to improve ties with Israel by ex-

ercising more obstinacy at peace talks.

"The change which occurred in Israel has removed all the justifications which were used to normalise ties. It also proved that Israel is not ready to give any important concessions to Arabs."

"The Israeli elections have shown that the Israeli political forces are not ready to give any important concessions to Arabs and are seeking to control the sources of the Arab wealth (oil)," Tishreen said.

Syria had strongly criticised Arab states including Oman, Qatar, Morocco and Tunisia for rushing to establish ties with Israel while the Jewish state continued to occupy Arab lands.

Tishreen praised the outcome of the Damascus meeting which grouped presidents Hafez Al Assad of Syria and Hosni Mubarak of Egypt and Saudi Crown Prince Abdulah.

The three leaders agreed at the end of a two-day meeting on Saturday to convene the Cairo summit and warned Israel that a retraction from commitment to peace would subject the region to tension and violence.

"The meeting laid a basis for the achievement of a strong Arab solidarity and revived hopes for closing the chapter of weakness and disunity among Arabs," Tishreen said.

It said Mr. Netanyahu would ignore the principles of the Arab-Israeli peace talks which began in 1991 and renewed calls for Arabs to counter his policy with a united front.

"The victory of the extremists led by Likud in Israel's elections had created new facts in the region and additional challenges which Arabs should face," Tishreen said.

"Netanyahu has declared that he would not withdraw from the Golan and the rest of the occupied Arab lands, and that he would bring more settlers to the occupied Arab territories. This proves that he will work for war and not peace," it added.

Syria's demands for full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights, seized by Israel in 1967, has hampered about five years of sporadic Syrian-Israeli peace negotiations.

Egyptian journalist union board resigns to protest law

CAIRO (AFP) — The executive board of Egypt's journalists' union submitted its resignation Monday, protesting the government had ignored appeals to change a controversial law which they say muzzles freedom of press.

The board's 12 members turned in their resignations to union President Ibrahim Nafie, who asked them to stay on until an emergency meeting of the general assembly on Wednesday, a union statement said.

The board members resigned "to protest the government's transgression towards journalists' demands for the annulment" of the controversial law passed in May last year.

They accused the government of "insisting on passing legislation contradictory to recognised principles of press freedom."

The move came after parliament on Sunday began consideration of an amended draft law intended to replace the controversial legislation which lays down jail terms of up to 15 years for journalists found guilty of defamation.

But journalists have complained the draft bill "does not meet even the minimum standards" demanded by the union.

Bosnian Serbs chase out U.N. staff in 'anti-Muslim orgy,' official says

SARAJEVO (AFP) — A mob of angry Serbs ran United Nations and local Muslim officials out of a Serb-controlled town at the weekend, in a state-managed "anti-Muslim orgy" aimed at blocking the return home of Muslim refugees, a U.N. official said Monday.

Kris Janowski, spokesman for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), said a "welcoming committee" of 100 angry Serbs on Saturday confronted the visitors in the northeastern town of Koraj, in Serb-run territory.

The mob had plastered anti-Muslim posters on the walls and chanted anti-Muslim abuse, forcing the U.N. team into an abrupt about-turn.

"Our cars were chased by a Serb car with some thugs in it, so it ended in a bit of a debacle," Mr. Janowski said.

A second trip near the Serb-controlled town of Doboj was cancelled at short notice, the local police chief claiming there were mines in the village to be visited, a comment Mr. Janowski dismissed as a "flimsy excuse."

He said the incidents were part of an orchestrated campaign to prevent Muslims from returning home, and branded the Serbs' commitment to freedom of movement enshrined in the Dayton peace accords as close to zero.

Of 10 planned visits to Serb

areas in the past 10 days only one had succeeded, he said. "This is certainly a manifestation of the harsh facts on the ground and tells us what a long way we have to go before we can piece the two communities together again."

"The overall problem is what we are seeing is Dayton being a marriage between a Muslim-Croat federation and a Serb republic) and unification, with the separation being temporary and unification is supposed to be permanent."

"The separation has worked very well. Our job, however, is linked to unification and here it hasn't worked basically, and we're still seeing a huge wall of hostility especially by Republika Srpska towards any moves that would bring the formerly warring ethnic groups together again."

Mr. Janowski said freedom of movement would remain "a major problem," warning that unless there was a "fundamental change in the attitude of the Republika Srpska authorities we'll face huge problems" trying to return Bosnia's estimated 2.4 million refugees and displaced people to their homes.

Some 70,000 refugees have returned since the Dayton accords were signed in December, and the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, last month

revised down to 500,000 the number of refugees expected to return this year.

Bosnia's former warring factions will reaffirm their commitment to the Dayton peace process at a peace conference this week expected to set a date for the country's first post-war general elections, a senior peace official said Monday.

The conference, due to open Thursday in the Italian city of Florence, will review the first six months of the U.S.-brokered accord.

Colum Murphy, a spokesman for Bosnia's top peace official, Carl Bildt, said: "We expect it (Florence) to be important as a form of recommitment" to the Dayton peace process.

Asked if the talks would result in the announcement of an election date he said: "I would expect that yes, but nobody is absolutely certain, even the participants, whether they will agree on that."

Conference host Italian Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini, whose country currently holds the European Union's rotating presidency, said last week he expected Bosnia's Muslims, Croats and Serbs to agree a date for the elections, due by Sept. 15.

A date for the series of seven polls and the disbursement of millions of dollars in reconstruction aid are expected to dominate the summit.

COLUMN 8

Australian swimmer claims Cuba-U.S. Record

STOCK ISLAND, Florida (R) — Australian marathon swimmer Susie Maroney was pulled from the Straits of Florida Sunday 19 kilometres short of landfall in the United States, and she claimed a new long-distance swimming record. Maroney, who was trying to become the first person to swim from Cuba to the United States, had nearly reached Boca Chica, a small island six miles (9.6 kilometres) northeast of Key West, after more than 37 hours in the water. In an impromptu news conference at the lower Florida Health Systems Hospital where she was taken for a checkup, Maroney said she believed she had accomplished her goal. "Yeah, oh definitely," she said. "We had an official observer." "She made it to the United States' waters, to the 12-mile limit," said Cheri Cohen, owner of the boat Fatal Attraction, which plucked Maroney out of the water and ferried her to Stock Island. Capt. Keith Cohen told Reuters by telephone later Sunday that Tom Hextel of the World Marathon Association had verified the 88.5 mile (142.4 kilometre) distance and declared it a world record, for swimming from Cuba to the United States without assistance. Maroney said she did not plan to try the Cuba-U.S. swim again. "I don't think I'll do it again, once is enough."

'Bandit Queen' spurned offer to head Ministry

NEW DELHI (AFP) — India's "Bandit Queen," Phoolan Devi, says she has rejected an offer to head the powerful Home Ministry in the new government, explaining that she cannot read or write. "I fear to become minister because I am illiterate and (this) may be taken advantage of by some people who want to tarnish my reputation," the former bandit, now in her mid-30s, told the Pioneer newspaper in remarks published Monday. She said she was offered the ministry in the 13-party United Front coalition government which took office on June 1, but declined it as she was "aware of my limitations." Ms. Devi, who forswore the bullet for the ballot and won an astounding victory from the carpet-weaving district of Mirzapur in the April-May elections on a Socialist Party ticket, said her mission was to fight injustice. "Parliament is the temple of justice where I will fight for the rights of the downtrodden, women and provide succour to those who have been denied justice," she was quoted as saying.

Priceless artifacts stolen from Mayan ruin

MEXICO CITY (R) — A group of heavily armed thieves stole 37 priceless Mayan artifacts from the museum at the world-famous Mayan ruins of Palenque in southern Mexico, officials said. Six hooded men broke into the museum, beat four security guards and stole the exhibits before fleeing into the jungle, Mexico's National Archaeology Institute said. The haul included jade plaques and bars, obsidian knives and flintstone pendants, most of them excavated between 1992 and 1994 from temples at the site. The Maya Indians, whose culture flourished in a large area of present-day southern Mexico and Central America in the first 1,000 years after Christ, often worked jade into religious objects. Palenque, about 800 kilometres south of Mexico City, is one of the best restored and most visited Mayan ruins.